महाभारत

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

BOOK 6

THE COMPLETE BHISMA PARVA

Transcreated from Sanskrit

by P. Lal

THE MAHĀBHĀRATA OF VYĀSA

The Complete Bhīṣma Parva
Transcreated śloka-by-śloka from Sanskrit by P. Lāl

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Two birds sit
on the golden bough
of the pippala tree.
One eats
the sweet fruit.
The other watches.
Both are happy.
One is happier.
Which?

Śvetāśvatara
Upaniṣad IV : 6

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The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

Transcreated by P. Lāl from the Sanskrit

BOOK SIX

The Complete Bhīṣma Parva

The Transcreator

P. Lāl is honorary Professor of English in St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. He was Special Professor of Indian Studies at Hofstra University, New York, 1962-63, and has lectured widely on Indian literature at English, American, and Australian universities. He was a delegate from India to the P. E. N. International Writers Conference in New York in June 1966, and Visiting Professor in the University of Illinois for the spring semester of 1968. Transcreated the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Mahānārānayaṇa Upaniṣads on a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship award in 1969-70. Visiting Professor of Comparative Literature, Hofstra University, spring 1971. Distinguished Visiting Professor and Consultant, Albion College, April-May 1972. Prentiss M. Brown Distinguished Visiting Professor, Albion College, January-May 1973. Robert Norton Visiting Professor, Ohio University, September 1973-June 1974. Visiting Professor of Indian Culture, Hartwick College, September-October 1975. Eli Lilly Visiting Professor, Berea College, February-May 1977. Honorary Doctorate of Letters, Western Maryland College, 1977. Currently at work on the complete English version of the Mahābhārata. Born 1928, married Shyamasree Devi 1955; has a son Ananda, and a daughter Srimati. Recipient of the Padma Shri award in 1970. Delegate to Asian Poets' Conference, Bangkok, 1988; Cambridge Literary Seminar, 1989; Harborfront Poetry Reading Series, Toronto, Canada, 1989. Appointed Suniti Kumar Chatterji Lecturer of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata in June 2005. St. Xavier's Lifetime Professor of Excellence award, 2005. Conferred Doctorate of Literature by University of Calcutta in 2006 for "literary scholarship, specially the seminal English transcreation of the Mahābhārata." Seventy five cassettes (each of 90 minutes' duration) of P. Lāl reading his transcreation of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata are available from WRITERS WORKSHOP. In October 1999 P. Lāl began a śloka-by-śloka public reading of the transcreated epic to a miscellaneous group every Sunday morning for an hour at the Library of Dharma and Culture in Calcutta to illustrate the importance of Vyāsa's work as an inspiring *oral* experience and not just a print-culture masterpiece, the long-term reading project to proceed till the hundred thousand and plus ślokas are exhausted. 350 hour-long CDs of this recording, taped live are available from WW.

Introduction

In a short Preface to the first edition of my English version of the Bhagavad-Gītā (published by WRITERS WORKSHOP in 1965) I wrote:

"I first translated the *Gītā* in 1947, in rhymed English verse." [Numerous extracts, including a generous portion of Canto 10, were printed in the St Xavier's College magazine *The Xaverian,* December 1947]. "It was an adolescent experiment and though a couplet or two may not have sounded too bad, the iambs and anapaests in general appeared to be contrived, precious, and terribly archaic.

"Another attempt in prose, five years later, became too flat. The original has the dignity and memorability of a chanted poem. Prose is too thin a medium for it.

"The essential structure of the *Gītā,* however, is question-and-answer. Arjuna questions; Krishna answers. The tone is lofty, but *intimate;* highly serious, but *friendly*; sacred, but *colloquially* so. The present translation tries to preserve the dialogue spirit of the Sanskrit, a spirit marked by simplicity, grace, brevity, and clarity. I have tried to retain the *Gītā's* sweetness of persuasion and strength of conviction.

"Readers who discover in my version a certain dramatic quality will be right in inferring that I see the sacred text of Hinduism as an integral part of Vyāsa's epic of India. In the epic, the *Gītā* appears to have only one purpose: to get Arjuna to fight. It is fitted neatly into the grand design of *dharmakṣetra Kurukṣetra.*"

A revised edition appeared in 1968, but I was not entirely satisfied with either version. Arjuna's behaviour on the battlefield – his refusal to fight and kill his relatives – inspired and simultaneously baffled me. It seemed to be out of character. Why should a Kṣatriya hesitate to do his military duty? I felt the answer must lie in the *totality* of Arjuna's character, and to discover that totality I embarked on a major project: to transcreate the *Mahābhārata* śloka by śloka, hoping in the process to find at least a few clues to clarify at least one of what I consider to be the three focal controversy-points in the *Gītā.*

Sixty years and three hundred and thirty six transcreated fascicules later, I have a few glimmerings, but still not the complete answer (assuming that there *is* a complete answer). Arjuna is a searching, because troubled, man, unlike his brothers who are satisfied with conventional values. He is the only Pāṇḍava brother

whose variety of erotic adventures suggests an almost restlessly twentieth-century hero seeking self-fulfilment through sexual satisfaction. He marries the princesses of Kaliṅga, Cedi, Madra, Magadha, and Yavana; in Hardwar he has a son Irāvat by Ulūpi, the Nāga princess; in Maṇipura he marries Citrāṅgadā and has a son by her named Babhru-vāhana; in Dvārakā he abducts and marries Krishna's sister Subhadrā and has a son by her, Abhimanyu. Bhīma (who marries the rākṣasī Hiḍimbā) and the other Pāṇḍavas have a wife each, apart from their common wife Draupadī. I suspect that Arjuna's mental makeup is worrying and questing, individualistic, even protestant. He cannot lose (because he possesses the invincible Gāṇḍīva bow), yet he will not fight. He prefers to be the world's first pacifist, a conscientiously objecting, bravely quaking and Quaker Hindu. To call him a "eunuch", as Krishna does [II:3], is an injustice. It requires a very special kind of courage to be "shamefully weak" in the Arjuna manner. For Arjuna stands for ahiṁsā, Krishna recommends a war of dharma [II:31]; Arjuna in the *Gītā* is, for whatever reason, the humanist, and Krishna, for whatever reason, is the militarist. And there is no reconciliation between these two fearfully opposed philosophies.

Which leads to the second focal point of debate in the *Gītā* – I mean the nature of the Cosmic Revelation in Cantos 10 and 11.. A careful reading of the *Gītā* will show that Arjuna keeps on questioning and arguing with Krishna until Canto 10. "You are confusing me with contradictory advice," he says [III : 2]. Quite naturally, for Krishna at one point comes up with a startling suggestion – the ātman is eternal : only the body dies; so go ahead and kill – you will kill only the body, the ātman will remain unaffected [II : 19-21]. There could hardly be a better example of forked-tongue speciousness, and Arjuna is justified in asking if such dynamic "action" is not worse than his passive non-doing based on "knowledge" and conscience:

> "Janārdana-Krishna!
> According to you, knowledge is superior to action.
> If that is so, Keśava-Krishna,
> Why are you urging me to do this horrible deed?"
>
> [III : 1]

The truth of the matter surely is that no rational refutation is possible of the essential humanist position that killing is wrong, especially when such a stand is grounded in a clean conscience and is cleanly argued. Some of the answers given by Krishna appear to be evasive and occasionally not unsophistic. When logic fails, Krishna

apparently resorts to divine magic, to māyā. The *Gītā* is transformed from a reasoning dialogue in Cantos 1-9 to a poetical and mystical darshan in Cantos 10-11. Unable to satisfy a worried warrior's stricken conscience by rational argument, Krishna opts for the unusual – he stuns Arjuna with a glorious "revelation" of psychedelic intensity. He succeeds: from Canto 12 Arjuna accepts whatever Krishna has to offer. Brain is overpowered by bhakti – but is it ethical to silence logic with magic? It seems to me that Krishna employs a confidence trick and, being Divinity, he not only gets away with it but actually is praised in some quarters for providing a climactic mystic vision. What I mean is that, in the twenty-first century, in the contemporary world, apocalyptically threatened by the unchecked proliferation of nuclear mushrooms, Arjuna stands for the voice of invincible conscience – he is the humanist hero who has risen above the demands of military caste and convention-ridden community. His plight on the field of Kurukṣetra is not an abstract, condemnable intellectual perplexity that can be juggled away by a "Cosmic Multi-Revelation". It is a painful and honest problem that Krishna should have faced on its own terms, painfully and honestly, and apparently did not. Or so the modern unimpressed mind thinks.

The third and last moral and religious insight – there are many others, but these three I consider to be the most stimulating and relevant in our age – comes in Canto 15. Krishna describes a "cosmic fig-tree" whose roots are in the sky, whose fruits are on earth. "Slice this firm-rooted aśvattha fig-tree with the sharp sword of non-attachment," he advises Arjuna, thus ending your karma and obtaining mokṣa. The coordinates of mokṣa are not given because freedom, if truly free, can have no limiting coordinates, no how-to-achieve-it gimmickry.

This cosmic fig-tree is a metaphor for one of Hinduism's profoundest and subtlest beliefs, a metaphor that has found its way into Indian village folklore as the *Kalpa-taru*, the Wish-Fulfilling Tree. The Bengali folksinger Rām Prosād Sen has a song in which he says: "Let's go, my mind, let's pluck the four fruits." These are the fruits that hang from the Wish-Fulfilling Tree. Christopher Isherwood retells the parable in his anthology *Vedanta for the West;* I narrated it in my introductory essay "On Understanding India" to Barbara Harrison's *Learning About India* (1977). It is worth repeating, for it helps to make Krishna's point in the *Gītā* clear. The story is exquisitely simple.

The proverbial benevolent uncle turns up in a village and finds his nephews and nieces and their friends playing in a hut with pebbles and make-do twig-and-rag dolls. "Why play with these?" he asks.

"Outside is the *Kalpa-taru*, the Wish-Fulfilling Tree. Stand under it, and wish. It will give you anything you want."

The children don't believe him. They know the world's not structured to give you whatever you want. Yo have to struggle very hard for the smallest reward – and, of course, others always seem to get the plums, for they have what is known as "connections".

They smile knowingly. The uncle leaves.

No sooner has he left, however, than they rush to the Tree, and start wishing. They want sweets – and they get stomach ache. The want toys – and they get boredom. Bigger and better toys–bigger and better boredom.

This worries them. Something must be wrong somewhere. Someone is tricking them. What is this unpleasant unsuspected unwanted extra that tags along with the sweets and the toys?

What they have not realised yet is that the Wish-Fulfilling Tree is the enormously generous but totally unsentimental cosmos. It will give you exactly what you want – "This will be your wish-fulfilling cow," says Krishna [III : 10] – and with it its built-in opposite. Nothing in this world comes single, everything comes with its built-in opposite. The tragedy of the world is not that we don't get what we want, but that we always get exactly what we want – along with its built-in opposite. Wish it, think it, dream it, do it – *voilà*, you've got it! – and, literally, you've had it. That's it – having and being had.

So the children grow up and become, euphemistically, "young adults". They reallly are just a bunch of over-grown kids, all trapped under the Wishing Tree. Instead of sweets and toys – childish trifles! – they now crave Sex, Fame, Money, and Power, the four sweet fruits that grow on the tree. Bittersweet fruits. There are, truly speaking, no other fruits. There is nothing else to be had.

They reach out and bite each of these four fruits and get the same bitter after-taste of dis-appointment and disillusionment. But they go on wishing, because there seems to be little else that one can do under the Wishing Tree. Creatures come and go, the Tree is always there.

Then they grow old, and are stretched out under the tree, lying on their death cots. Pathetic old Hindu senior citizens, kindly referred to as "guru-jana", "respected elders". They lie huddled in three security-seeking groups. The first group whispers, "It's all a hoax. The world's a farce." Fools; they have learnt nothing.

The second huddle whispers, "We made the wrong wishes. We'll wish again. This time we will make the right wish." Bigger fools; they have learnt less than nothing.

The third group is the foolishest. "What's the point living? Nothing

makes sense. We want to die."

The obliging tree quickly grants their last desire. They die – and they get the built-in opposite of the death-wish – they are re-born – and under the same tree, for there is no other place to get born or re-born in.

The parable does not end here. It speaks of a lame boy. The young cripple also hobbled to the tree, but was shoved aside by his more agile friends. So he crawled back to the hut and gazed at the marvellous Ygdrasil from the window, waiting for a chance to go and make the wish that lame boys make. What he saw from the window awed and nearly unnerved him.

He saw his companions wanting sweets and getting sick. He saw them scrambling for Sex, Fame, Money and Power, and getting their opposites, and agonising – and not realising the cause of their anguish. He saw them divided into three groups – the Cynics, the self- appointed Wise Guys, and the hope-bereft Death-Wishers. He saw them clearly, with the poignant brilliant sharpness of naked truth.

The spectacle of this cosmic swindle so *impressed* him that he stood stunned in brief, lucid bafflement. A divine comedy, a divine tragicomedy, the panoramic cycle of karma, was being enacted in front of his eyes. A gush of compassion welled in his heart for the victims of karma, and in that gush of compassion the lame boy *forgot* to wish. Wanted to – but forgot. He had sliced the cosmic fig-tree with non-attachment.

He stood outside the orbit of the world's ambivalence.

He had, in showing spontaneous compassion, not done the planned good act, which earns heaven for its doer and leads to better re-birth. The Hindu heaven is a temporary state, because heaven is really a punishment for good deeds.

Nor had he done the "bad" act, which earns hell, again temporary, after which one is born again. The Hindu tradition feels that no crime is so bad as to deserve an eternity of punishment.

He had not done the absurd act, either, by opting to cop out of the system. After all, my life is my life, and I can take it whenever I want to; there is no one really to stop me.

He had sliced the cosmic fig-tree by doing the "pure" act, the act of gratuitous compassion which gets no reward or punishment, since it lies outside the give-and-take orbit. The pure act – *niṣkāma karma* – is its own reward. Until the gesture of the pure act is made, we are all trapped under the Wish-Fulfilling Tree. The cripple did not *consciously* know this. He stood, in the medicinal shade of his compassion and beyond the pale of the Tree, marvelling at the

wondrous and complex and dread fabric of the universe, and forgetting to wish. Forgetting – not remembering to forget. He was the "free", the serene man, the genuine candidate for mokṣa, untouched by the world's ambivalence, and by the heaven and hell the world so copiously offers.

The big question is: Is such compassion possible? Krishna says, in effect, that act one *must* – the body compels it: "True giving-up is renunciation of fruits" [XVIII : 11]. Yes, but can the ordinary human being ever give up the fruits of action? Is the carrot dangled by Krishna ever achievable through the ego-ridden efforts of mankind? Is Hinduism again talking so big and positing goals so idealistic that, with the exception of saints, all must despair of success? Is it reasonable, is it practical to expect Arjuna, trained as a Kṣatriya, expert in the arts of war, to fight without desire to win?

The *Gītā* does not say. Only life can teach us. Very few learn. Those who do, find the pure act very difficult to put into practice. Words are one thing; deeds another. The Vedas say, "*Caraivati* : Keep trying. Keep moving" The rest is not our business, that is, if we are to believe Krishna.

The *Gītā* begins with the word "dharma", and ends with the word "mama". My dharma : dharma mama. It's a wonderful lesson to learn. When a worrying Arjuna asks, as a Kṣatriya, "What if I fail? Will I not fall like a tattered cloud?" Krishna assures him, "*Tata*, dear one, the struggle for *kalyāṇa* is never wasted." There is no failure even if one does not succeed in the search for virtue, goodness, and welfare. Or, as T. S. Eliot puts it: Not farewell, but fare well, travellers. Neither Krishna, nor Vyāsa, nor T. S. Eliot tells as which road is the best. Four roads diverge in the wood in which Dante, in the thirtieth year of his life, lost his bearings, as all of us do, some time or other. Which road to take? You are free to choose, says Krishna: *Yathā icchasi, tathā kuru.* Sva-dharma (self-preserving conscience), kula-dharma (family and caste duty), yuga-dharma (the pressures of the zeitgeist spirit of the age), or sanātana dharma (the perfect eternal morality)? Only one road can be taken. How will the traveller ever know which road leads to mokṣa, which to a dead-end?

Kolkata
August 1995
May 2004
December 2006

The Bhīṣma Parva

Nārāyaṇaṁ namaskṛtya
Naraṁ caiva Narottamaṁ |
Devīṁ Sarasvatīm Vyāsaṁ
tato jayam udīrayet ||

INVOCATION

We namaskāra Nārāyaṇa!
We namaskāra Nara!
We namaskāra finest-of-men Narottama!
We namaskāra Devī Sarasvatī!
We namaskāra Vyāsa!
May victory attend us. We exclaim Jaya!

नारायण नमस्कृत्य
नरं चैव नरोत्तमम्
देवीं सरस्वतीं व्यासं
ततो जयमुदीरयेत

SECTION ONE

1 Janamejaya asked: "How did they fight,
all those mahātmā heroes from various lands –
the Kauravas, Pāṇḍavas,
and Somakas?"

2 O ruler of the earth (answered Vaiśampāyana),
let me tell you
how the Kauravas, Pāṇḍavas and Somakas fought
on tapasyā-sanctified Kurukṣetra.

3 Reaching Kurukṣetra, the mahā-powerful Pāṇḍavas
and Kauravas and Somakas
drew up plans,
hoping for their respective victories.

4 Proficient in the Vedas, they looked forward
to the battle.
Eager to win, they arrayed their armies
in battle formations.

5 As they neared the army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son,
the heroic Pāṇḍavas
camped on the west side of the field,
facing the east.

6 Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira immediately ordered
thousands of tents
pitched around the region
known as the Samanta-pañcaka.

7 The entire area was open and empty –
no civilians,
horses, chariots, elephants –
elders and children stayed at home.

8 O excellent earth-lord!
The armies had come from all the parts
of Jambūdvīpa's maṇḍala
that are lit by the sun.

9 Men of all complexions had gathered.
They occupied land
that covered many *yojanas* of fields,
rivers, woods, hills.

10 That bull-brave hero, rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
issued orders
for the supply of fine food and conveniences
to his soldiers.

11 Yudhiṣṭhira made arrangements for comfortable beds
for the night.
He devised code-words for quick recognition
of the Pāṇḍava leaders.

12 He also gave names and easily recognisable
emblems and badges,
so that they could be quickly identified
during the battle.

13 Seeing the emblem of Pārtha-Arjuna
waving atop his flagstaff,
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's mahā-minded son
readied his huge forces.

14 He was shaded by a white umbrella;
his hundred brothers
surrounded him;
a thousand elephants guarded him.

15 When they spotted Duryodhana,
the belligerent Pāñcālas exulted;
they blew their deafening mahā-conches,
and sounded their sweet *bheri*-cymbals.

16 The Pāṇḍavas and Vāsudeva-Krishna
were delighted when they saw
the war-eager warriors of the Pāñcālas
exulting on the field.

17 Tiger-brave Vāsudeva-Krishna
and Dhañanjaya-Arjuna,
seated in their chariot, thrilled with joy
and blew loudly their divine conches.

18 The deafening roar of the conches
called Pāñcajanya and Devadatta
terrified the soldiers
into urinating and defecating.

19 The roaring of a lion
terrorises other forest animals;
similarly the blowing of the conches
traumatised the Kauravas.

20 Everything was obscured
in a massive flurry of dust;
the sun, shrouded in the haze,
appeared to have set.

21 A cloud appeared and released a shower
of flesh-and-blood
on the concourse of soldiers.
It was weird, it was unbelievable.

22 A wind began blowing, scattering millions
of stone chips on the earth,
and harassing the hundreds
of thousands of soldiers.

23 O Indra-among-rājās, the two armies
waited, exulting, on Kurukṣetra
like two frothing oceans
poised to clash.

24 They stood, like two oceans
at the end of a yuga –
an eerie and wonderful sight
of two armies clashing.

25 The entire area was open and empty –
no civilians,
horses, chariots, elephants –
children and elders stayed at home.

26 The Kauravas, Pāṇḍavas and Somakas,
O bull-brave Bharata,
agreed on certain rules
for the conduct of the battle –

27 For instance, that a soldier should fight
only an adversary equally equipped.
Retreat after fair combat
was perfectly honourable,

28 And no soldier engaged in such withdrawal
would be harmed.
Those who fought with words
would face counter-words;
those who deserted would in no way
be attacked.

29 A chariot-hero would fight
another chariot-hero, O Bharata,
elephant with elephant, horse with horse,
infantry with infantry.

30 The criteria for combat were fitness,
willingness to fight, enthusiasm, and strength.
No unprepared or panicky soldier
could be attacked.

31 Also not to be attacked were:
a soldier fighting another,
or surrendering, or retreating, or broken-weaponed,
or without armour.

32 Charioteers, animals, weapon-suppliers,
drum-beaters
and conch-blowers could on no account
be attacked.

33 After making these agreements on war-conduct,
the Kauravas, Pāṇḍavas, and Somakas
stared at each other,
pleasantly surprised.

34 They arrayed their forces accordingly;
  and these mahātmās were happy.
The faces of these bull-brave heroes
  expressed their joy.

SECTION TWO

1 Seeing the two armies (continued Vaiśampāyana)
  poised on the east and west,
Veda-wise Vyāsa, the *bhagavān* ṛṣi,
  Satyavatī's son,

2 The bhagavān pitāmaha of the Bharatas,
  with insight into past, present, and future, –
seeing them prepared
  for the impending calamity –

3 Secretly went to Vicitravīrya's son Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
  the rājā who at the time
was plunged in profound dejection
  over the machinations of his sons.

4 "O rājā, time has run out for your sons
  and other earth-lords.
They are gathered here to fight
  and to kill each other.

5 O descendant of Bharata," continued Vyāsa,
  "time has run out, they are going to die.
But Kāla is what it is,
  so do not grieve.

6 O lord-of-the-earth my son,
  if you wish to see them on the battlefield,
I will grant you sight
  for this purpose."

7 "O finest of Brahma-ṛṣis," replied Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
  "I have no desire
to see my kinsfolk butchered.
  But I wish to hear the details."

8 O rājā! Because Dhṛtarāṣṭra declined to see,
preferring to hear about the battle,
lord-of-favours Vyāsa granted a boon
to Sañjaya.

9 "Rājā," said Vyāsa, "Sañjaya will report
the great war to you.
Nothing that happens on the field
will remain unrevealed to him.

10 He will, with his super-sensuous sight,
report the great battle, O rājā.
He will have knowledge of every detail
of this war.

11 Open or hidden,
happening in daytime or at night,
even what is only imagined –
will be known to Sañjaya.

12 No weapons will wound him,
no activity exhaust him.
Sañjaya, the son of Gavalgaṇa,
will survive the war.

13 O bull-brave Bharata!
I will arrange to circulate the glory
of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas everywhere.
So do not grieve.

14 O tiger-brave hero! Such is destiny.
So do not grieve.
It is inevitable. As for victory –
victory is where dharma is."

15 Having said this (continued Vaiśampāyana),
the mahā-fortune-favoured *bhagavān,*
the supreme grandfather of the Kauravas,
said to Dhṛtarāṣṭra:

16 "Mahārāja, there will be a mahā-carnage
on the battlefield.
I have seen many omens that indicate
heinous disaster.

17 Hawks, vultures, crows, cranes, and *kaṅkas*
can be seen
alighting on tree-tops everywhere
in large numbers.

18 Pleased at the prospect of battle,
these birds stare at the field.
Flesh-eating creatures will feast
on dead elephants and horses.

19 Fearful *kaṅkas*, birds of ill omen,
wheel across the centre of the field
and fly southwards,
screaming as they swerve.

20 O Bharata descendant, at the *saṁdhyā*-twilights
of morning and evening
I see the rising and setting sun obscured
by headless trunks.

21 The sun at both *saṁdhyās*
is obscured
with three lightning-charged clouds
that look like bludgeons:
their edges
are white and red,
their centre black.

22 I see the sun and the moon and the stars
ablaze!
I see them at night
equally ablaze!
I see all this in the day,
I see all this at night.
O colossal calamity!

23 On the fifteenth full-moon night of the bright fortnight
in the month of Kārtikeya,
I see the moon splendourless,
It is invisible,
Or else it blazes in the lotus-blue sky.

24 They will all be killed, the heroes.
They will sleep like a shroud on the earth –
all the lords of the earth,
the rājās and the sons of rājās,
the brave ones with arms like maces.

25 Every day, at night, I see in the sky
wild boars and wildcats
screaming and fighting.

26 I see the icons of gods
trembling
grimacing
vomiting blood
disintegrating
toppling.

27 O lord of the world,
without being beaten, drums sound forth!
The chariots of Kṣatriyas move,
with no animals pulling them!

28 Kokilas
Woodpeckers
Jays
Watercocks
Parrots
Crows
Peacocks
scream fearfully!

29 Horsemen in armour
run helter-skelter
brandishing weapons.
At sunrise
swarm upon swarm of *śalabha*-insects
fills the sky.

30 At both *saṁdhyās*, O Bharata,
the four quarters seem to be on fire.
From Parjanya-clouds there pours
a shower of blood and marrow.

31 O rājā, the constellation Arundhatī,
revered by the sādhus in the three worlds
pushes her lord Vasiṣṭha behind her back.

32 The planet Śanaiścara harasses
the planet Rohiṇī.
The sign of the deer in the moon
is obliterated.
Mahā-calamity!

33 Cloudless –
yet the sky reverberates with mahā-noise.
Animals weep,
tears roll down their eyes."

SECTION THREE

1 Vyāsa continued:
"Cows give birth to asses.
Sons have sexual intercourse with their mothers.
Trees sprout flowers and fruits out of season.

2 Instead of giving birth to sons,
pregnant women are producing monsters.
Carnivorous beasts and birds feed together.

3 Ill-omened beasts
three-horned
four-eyed
five-legged
two-penised
two-headed
two-tailed
countless-toothed

4 Are born; agape,
They shriek weirdly.
Three-legged, four-toothed horses
are born –
with crests
and horns.

5 The wives of many Veda-wise Brahmins
in the city
have given birth
to *garuḍas* and peacocks.

6 O ruler of the earth,
mares give birth to calves
bitches give birth to jackals
elephants give birth to puppies.
Parrots screech.

7 Women give birth to quadruplet girls
and quintuplets
who sing and dance and laugh
as soon as they are born.

8 The scum of the lowest castes
dance and sing and laugh.
Mahā-calamity!

9 As if driven by death,
they sketch images of war.
Children run helter-skelter
with sticks in their hands.

10 They smash their toy towns.
Lotuses and lilies grow on trees.

11 Horrendous winds
Dust storms
Vibrating earth
Rāhu edging towards the sun.

12 Passing near the planet Citra
The white planet Ketu stops.
I foresee
A terrible slaughter of the Kauravas.

13 A comet rises,
Harassing Puṣya.
This planet is ominously harmful
To both armies.

14 Maṅgala marches towards Maghā
Bṛhaspati marches towards Śravaṇa
The sun's child Śani marches towards
And harasses Bhaga.

15 The planet Śukra ascends
In the direction of Pūrvabhādra,
Swerving towards the Uttarabhadra,
It stares fixedly at it.

16 Ketu, suddenly ablaze and smoking,
Pauses
And harasses the radiant planet of Indra.

17 Dhruva, blazing,
Advances towards the right.
The sun and moon harass Rohiṇī.
The fearful planet Rāhu
Stands between Citrā and Svātī.

18 The red-bright planet Maṅgala,
In a wide orbit,
Circles Śravaṇa
Which is overpowered by Brahmarāśi or Bṛhaspati.

19 The earth that produces seasonal crops
Suddenly produces all crops simultaneously.
Each barley stalk has five ears,
Each paddy stalk a hundred.

20 The finest of the world's animals,
The cows, milked after their calves have sucked,
Secrete blood instead of milk.

21 Bows emit bright rays,
Swords shine weirdly.
It is clear these weapons
Foresense the approaching war

22 The shine of weapons, of water, of armour, of flags –
Is like that of fire.
A mahā-carnage is imminent.

23 O Bharata, O rājā,
In the impending battle
Between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
The earth will be a gory river,
The flags will be floating rafts.

24 Animals and birds scream crazily
On all sides.
Their mouths are flaming.
Mahā-calamity!

25 In the sky, at night,
A bird flies,
One-eyed, one-winged, one-legged.
It screeches,
As if about to vomit blood.

26 O Indra-among-rājās,
All weapons seem to glow with a new radiance.
But the radiance of the seven-star constellation
Suddenly fades.

27 The two fiery planets, Bṛhaspati and Śanaiścara,
Having come near Viśakha,
Have stopped there for a whole year.

28 Three lunar movements meet twice
Or thrice
In the same fortnight;
So, on the thirteenth day from the first movement,
The day of the full moon,
The sun and moon are devoured by Rāhu.
All this forebodes carnage.

29 The earth is obscured with massive dust-drifts,
Inordinately inauspicious.
Horrendous-looking clouds at night
Rain rivers of blood.

30 O ruler of the earth,
Fierce Rāhu harasses Krittikā.
Ominous winds blow continuously.

31 All these forebode a war, where many will weep.
There are three classes of planets.
A baleful planet harasses each class.
Supreme calamity!

32 A lunar fortnight consists of fourteen days,
Or fifteen or sixteen.
But now, on the thirteenth day,
In the same month,
Two eclipses have occurred.

33 These are unnatural eclipses
Of the sun and the moon.
A carnage of creatures on Kṛṣṇa-catur-daśī!
Insatiable blood-guzzling by rākṣasas.

34 The great rivers flow
In reverse. Wells spurt up like bellowing bulls.
The waters of these rivers
Are churned blood.

35 As dazzling as Śakra-Indra's thunderbolt,
Meteors hit the earth with sizzling sounds.
Before this night passes,
A dreadful danger will descend on you.

36 A thick darkness will shroud the earth.
Even mahā-ṛṣis with blazing torches
Will not be able to see each other.

37 O radiant lord! The earth will drink the blood
Of thousands of kings.
From the high mountains
Of Kailāsa, Mandara, and Himavant,

38 Comes a great reverberation of noise,
Like the toppling of thousands of summits.
The earth trembles.
The four oceans overflow.

39 Fierce winds blow dust and stone-chips,
And crush trees in confusion.
Struck by lightning,

40 Sacred and other trees shrivel
In villages and towns.
As Brahmins chant before the sacred fire,
The fire turns yellow or blue.

41 Its flames flicker to the left.
It smells odiously,
It crackles noisily. O ruler of the earth!
Touch, taste, and smell have lost their natures.

42 The war-flags shiver
And emit puffs of smoke;
Sparks scatter
From drums and cymbals.

43 Crows take off from tall trees, in maṇḍala-flocks,
Wheeling to the left;
They perch in strange places,
Cawing in cacophony.

44 They settle on flagstaffs,
Screeching *pakvā-pakvā.*
All this forebodes
The slaughter of kings.

45 Vicious elephants run wild,
Urinating and defecating everywhere.
The elephants sweat,
The horses are moody.

46 O Bharata, you have heard
Of these omens.
Do the right thing.
Save the world from disaster."

47 After listening to the words of his father
(continued Vaiśampāyana), Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"All this has been ordained.
The men are destined to perish.

48 If these rājās die in battle
According to Kṣatriya-dharma,
They will attain happiness
In the regions of the heroes.

49 If these tiger-brave heroes
Lose their lives in the great war,
They will find fame in this world
And long-term mahā-happiness in the next."

50 O excellent rājā (continued Vaiśampāyana),
These words of his son Dhṛtarāṣṭra
Made the Indra-among-poets Kavīndra-Vyāsa
Meditate deeply.

51 Having meditated briefly, Vyāsa said:
"O Indra of earth-lords, it is true
That Kāla consumes the universe,

52 And Kāla creates the universe.
Nothing here is eternal.
Therefore, to your relatives, to your friends,
And to the Kauravas,

53 Show the path of dharma.
You are the right person to do so.
It is horrible to kill kinsmen.
Do not hurt me by doing
What is so repugnant.

54 O lord of the world, your son here
Has taken the form of Kāla.
There is no pūjā in the Vedas for killing.
Killing can lead to no good.

55 Family-dharma is like one's own body:
Violate it, and you destroy yourself.
Kāla intends the destruction
Of your race, your protest notwithstanding.

56 And Kāla has made you accept this crime.
O lord of the world,
Your kingdom has been your calamity.

57 Your own dharma has declined.
At least remind your son of his dharma.
What use is it ruling a kingdom
That is heavy with crime?

58 Guard your name, your dharma, your reputation.
Then only will you find heaven.
Give the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas
And gain peace for the Kauravas."

59 Ambikā's son Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
Fluent in speech,
Said to Vyāsa, the Indra-of-Brahmins,
Interrupting him:

60 "My knowledge of being
and absence of being
is equal to yours.
I know that the world,
tāta, dear father, is selfish.
I'm a man of the world.

61 Your power is great, O maharṣi,
your grace is immense,
your mind is controlled.
Adharma I dislike,
but what can I do?
My son disobeys me.

62 You are the instrument of the fame and valour
And dharma of the Bharata race.
You are the honoured grandsire
Of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas."

63 "Son of Vicitravīrya," said Vyāsa,
"Tell me plainly what is in your mind.
I will do my best to remove your confusion."

64 "*Bhagavan*, revered one," replied Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"Tell me:
What are the omens that indicate victory in war?"

65 Vyāsa replied:
"The fire of the yajña
has a cheerful appearance:
its radiance ascends,
its flames have no smoke
and they swerve to the right,
its libations always
have a delicate fragrance.
These are some of the signs
of victory in war.

66 The sounds of the cymbals
and conches are deep.
Sunlight and moonlight
are brilliantly pure.
These are some of the signs
of victory in war.

67 In flight or perching,
the cawing of crows
becomes melodious.
The soldiers behind
encourage the soldiers
in front to attack.

68 When vultures and cranes,
and parrots and swans
and woodpeckers wheel
to the right, and their cries
are pleasing, then Brahmins
say victory's certain.

69 And subduing of enemies
is always achieved
by soldiers whose armour
and ornaments and shields
and flags are so bright
that they dazzle the eyes.

70 O Bharata descendant!
The warriors who shout cheerfully,
Whose garlands do not fade,
Whose courage is never lost,
Always cross the ocean of war.

71 They always win
Who, before striking their enemy,
Soften the blow with a kind word,
And who give warning before attacking.

72 It is a sure sign of victory
If morale is high among soldiers at all times,
And if hearing, seeing, rasa, smell, and touch
Remain clear and auspicious.

73 When winds, clouds, and birds become pleasing,
When skies send rain and Indra-*dhanuṣa,*
Then victory is certain.

74 These are some of the signs of victory.
When contrary signs are seen, O earth-lord,
Then death can be expected.

75 Small army or large army,
What matters is its soldiers' morale.
That is a sure sign of victory.

76 One soldier, panicking, can panic
A whole army;
An army panicking
Makes the bravest soldier flee.

77 Once scattering in panic,
An army cannot be easily reorganised.
It becomes a frightened pack of deer,
An onrushing mahā-torrent.

78 Once an army breaks up,
It cannot be reorganised.
Even its veteran warriors
Become confused and cowardly.

79 And when soldiers panic, O rājā,
Panic spreads elsewhere too.
Soon there is total disorder –
Everyone fleeing everywhere.

80 When an army panics, O lord of the earth,
Even the bravest leaders
Of its fourfold divisions
Cannot stop the chaos.
An intelligent ruler
Must always keep this in mind.

81 The best victory is through negotiation.
Victory through division in the enemy's ranks is average.
O lord of the earth! The worst victory is on the battlefield.

82 War has many mahā-evils.
The first of these is slaughter.
If they know one another,
If they do not have family ties,
If they are one-minded,

83 Even fifty brave men
Can rout an entire army.
Even five, or six, or seven unretreating warriors
Can achieve victory.

84 O Bharata-descendant!
The lovely-plumaged son of Vinatā, Garuḍa,
Never needs many mahā-helpers
When he attacks flocks of birds.

85 It is not large numbers
That lead to victory, O Bharata.
Victory is never certain.
Victory is always unpredictable.
Even those who win, lose in the process."

SECTION FOUR

1 Saying this to wise Dhṛtarāṣṭra (continued Vaiśampāyana)
Vyāsa left.
Dhṛtarāṣṭra meditated on his words in silence.

2 He kept sighing repeatedly.
O bull-brave Bharata,
He turned to ātman-disciplined Sañjaya and asked:

3 "Sañjaya, these rulers, these lords of the earth,
so brave and happy,
so eager to strike each other
with fierce weapons –

4 No one can stop them. They will fight
and they will kill,
and they will add to the population
of Yama's realm.

5 They hanker for the joys of the world,
and they hate each other.
What a remarkable world of varied guṇas!
Tell me, Sañjaya.

6 Thousands, lakhs, crores, and tens of crores
of excellent soldiers
have gathered here
on Kurujāṅgala-Kurukṣetra.

7 Tell me, Sañjaya, in detail everything
about the areas
and locations and cities
where these soldiers come from.

8 By the power of the radiant ṛṣi Vyāsa,
you have gained inseeing vision
lit by the lamp
of divine intelligence."

9 "O bull-brave mahā-wise lord," replied Sañjaya,
"I will narrate what I know.
See it with your *śāstra*-vision.
Namasté!

10 This world has two kinds of life –
moving and unmoving.
Moving life is yoni-born, egg-born,
or heat-and-damp-born.

11 O rājā! Among moving creatures
the womb-born have primacy.
Among the womb-born, man takes primacy;
followed by beast.

12 O lord of the earth, fourteen domestic
and fourteen wild creatures
are mentioned in the Vedas, O rājā.
Yajña depends on them.

13 Among domestic creatures man takes primacy,
among wild the lion.
All creatures subsist by feeding
upon each other.

14 Vegetable life is inorganic.
It is of five kinds;
trees, shrubs, creepers,
short-lived creeping plants, stemless plants.

15 Moving and unmoving creatures
make up nineteen types.
There are five mahā-elements.
So twenty-four in all, known as Gāyatrī.

16 O bull-brave Bharata! Whoever knows
that all this is the holy Gāyatrī,
containing all the guṇas,
is freed from physical destruction.

17 There are seven wild
and seven domestic kinds of animals.
Lions, tigers, buffaloes, elephants, bears,
and monkeys –

18 These are considered to be
the wild animals.
Men, cows, goats, sheep, horses, mules,
and asses –

19 These are considered to be
the domestic animals.
Altogether, they comprise a total
of fourteen types.

20 All things rise from the earth,
All things return to the earth.
The earth is the sustenance and refuge of all.

21 The man who possesses the earth
Possesses at the wealth of moving and unmoving life.
That is why rājās desire to possess the earth,
And will kill to get what they desire."

SECTION FIVE

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"The names of rivers and mountains,
and the names of all the provinces
and other details

2 About this earth, including the dimensions
of the earth and its forests --
tell me these, O Sañjaya,
you who know."

3 "Mahārāja," replied Sañjaya,
"everything in this world consists
of the five mahā-elements.
All things, to the wise, are *sama,* the same.

4 Earth, water, wind, fire, *ākāśa*-ether
are the five elements.
Earth is foremost, being itself
and having the guṇas of the other four.

5 The guṇas are smell, taste or rasa, vision,
touch and sound.
Mahā-ṛṣis say each element
has its corresponding guṇa.

6 O rājā, water has four guṇas;
it lacks the guṇa of smell.
Fire has three guṇas: sound, touch, vision.
Wind has sound and touch;
and *ākāśa*-ether has only
the guṇa of sound.

7 Rājā, these five guṇas are the bases
of the five mahā-elements;
the creatures of the world depend on the elements
for sustenance.

8 Before creation, when all is one homogenous
sameness,
These elements have independent and separate
existences.

9 When their independent status ceases,
and they co-relate,
the bodied creatures of the world result.
No other way.

10 The elements have a patterned destruction:
earth into water, water into fire,
fire into air, air into *ākāśa*-either,
They also have a patterned creation:
air from ether, fire from air,
water from fire, earth from water.
They are immeasurable,
being Creator-forms.

11 The five elements make up
the creatures of the world.
By reason men try to discover
the varying proportions.

12 But reason cannot discover that
which is beyond-mind.
Beyond-Prakṛti, or stuff-of-nature,
is beyond-mind.

13 Mahārāja, I will now describe to you
the island called Sudarśana:
this island is circular
like a *cakra.*

14 It teems with rivers,
It has mountains that reach the clouds,
It has cities and enchanting provinces.

15 Its trees are filled with fruit and flower,
It has all varieties of food crops,
All manner of wealth;
It is encircled by the salt ocean.

16 Just as a man's face is reflected in a mirror,
The island called Sudarśana
Is reflected in the maṇḍala of the moon.

17 On two sides it looks like a *pippala* tree,
On the other two sides like an enormous hare.

18 The rest is all water.
I will describe that to you soon.
In the meantime, listen to this brief description."

SECTION SIX

1 "Sañjaya, you are intelligent," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
"You know the truth.
You have given me a brief description of the island.
Give me all the details.

2 What are the dimensions of those parts
That resemble a hare?
Having explained that, you may proceed
To the parts that resemble a *pippala*."

3 Sañjaya replied to the rājā's enquiry:
"Mahārāja, stretching from east to west
Are six mountains of the same height,
Running parallel along the eastern to the western shore.

4 They are the Himavant
  the Hemakūṭa
  the magnificent Niṣadha
  the *vaidūrya*-gemmed Nīla.
  the moon-white Śveta
  the all-mineralled Śṛṅgavat.

5 These, O rājā, are the six mountains
Inhabited by Siddhas and Cāraṇas.

6 They extend over a thousand *yojanas,* O Bharata,
Where many enchanting territories can be found,
The divisions being known as *varṣas.*

7 All manner of creatures inhabit these *varṣas.*
This *varṣa* is called the Bhārata, bordered by Himavant.

8 Beyond Hemakūṭa is Hari-varṣa.
South of the Nila and north of the Niṣadha,

9 O mahā-fortune-favoured one, is the range Mālyavat
Which runs from east to west.
Beyond Mālyavat is the Gandhamādana.

10 Between these two is a mountain called Meru.
It is shaped like a maṇḍala.
It is made of gold.
It glows like the morning sun.
It shines like smokeless fire.

11 It is eighty four thousand *yojanas* high,
And it reaches to a depth of sixteen thousand *yojanas.*

12 It straddles the worlds below, above, and across.
Near it are four islands:

13 Bhadrāśva, Ketumāla, Jambūdvīpa, O Bharata,
And Uttarakuru, which is inhabited by the very pious.

14 Suparṇā's son, lovely-faced Garuḍa,
Seeing that all birds on Meru were golden-plumaged,
Thought:

15 *I will fly away from this mountain;*
Because fine, average, and inferior birds are all equal here.

16 The super-eminent luminary, the sun, respectfully
Circles round Meru. So also the moon
Does *pradakṣiṇa,* with its planets:
And Vāyu does the same.

17 Mahārāja, that mountain
Has celestial fruits and flowers;
It is studded with golden mansions.

18 O rājā, gods, gandharvas, anti-gods, rākṣasas, apsarās–
All come to this mountain for their pleasures.

19 Brahmā, Rudra-Śiva, and lord of the gods Śakra-Indra
Meet on this mountain
And perform many yajñas with elaborate *dakṣiṇās.*

20 The gandharvas Tumburu, Nārada, Viśvāvasu,
Hāhā and Hūhū
Come to his mountain, to extol the excellent gods.

21 The seven mahātmā ṛṣis
And Kaśyapa and Prajāpati
Come to this mountain
On every full-moon and every new-moon day.

22 On the summit of the mountain, Uśanas the Poet
Sports with the Daityas, O lord of the earth.
Jewels, gems, and precious stones are in his custody.

23 Bhagavān Kubera enjoys only a fourth of this wealth;
He grants a sixteenth part to humans for their
enjoyment.

24 On Meru's north is an exquisite forest of *karṇikāras,*
Draped with flowers of every season,
Stretching across a continuous range of hills.

25 Bhagavān Paśupati-Śiva, creator of all beings,
Surrounded by his attendants,
Sports there with his wife Umā.

26 Around his neck is a garland of *karṇikāra* flowers
Reaching to his knees.
He radiates effulgence.
His three eyes are like three suns.

27 Holy-vowed and truth-speaking Siddhas,
Practisers of marvellous tapasyā,
Can see him.
Ill-behaving people cannot see
Maheśvara-Paśupati-Śiva.

28 O lord of men! From the summit of Meru,
Like a river of sweet milk,
Universal-formed and resort of the holy,

29 Falls the sacred Gaṅgā, sanctifying Bhāgīrathī,
With tremendous force and awesome noise,
In the sacred lake called Candramas.

30 That sacred lake, large as an ocean,
Is the child of the Gaṅgā.
Unable to be received by the mountains,
The holy Gaṅgā,

31 Was held in his head by Pināka-wielding Śiva
For a thousand years.
West of Meru is the island of Ketumāla.

32 There, O Bharata, one comes across
Thickly-populated Jambūkhaṇḍa,
Where the average life-span
Is ten thousand years.

33 There the men are gold-skinned,
The women all apsarās.
They are always smiling.
No sickness, no sorrow.

34 The men there have the radiance
Of melted gold.
On Gandhamādana mountain,
Kubera, with many rākṣasas,

35 Kubera, lord of the Guhyakas,
Sports with apsarās,
Felicitously passing his time.
On both sides of the Gandhamādana
Are numerous smaller mountains.

36 The average human life-span there
Is eleven thousand years. O rājā.
The men are happy, strong, and mahā-vigorous.
The women are ravishing to look at,
They have lotus-lovely complexions.

37 Beyond the Nīla is Śveta;
Beyond Śveta is Hairaṇyaka;
Beyond Hairaṇyaka is Hirāvata, O rājā,
Replete with territories.

38 Mahārāja, the last *varṣa* in the north
And Bhārata-*varṣa* in the south
Are both bow-shaped.
In the centre of the five *varṣas* is Ilāvṛta.

39 Each northern *varṣa* excels
Its immediate southern neighbour
In life-span, prestige, health, dharma, kāma, and artha.

40 Mahārāja, creatures have a gregarious existence
In these *varṣas*. The entire earth, O Bharata,
Is covered with these mountains.

[VI:6:41-49]

41 The mahā-mountain of Hemakūṭa, O rājā,
Is also known as Kailāsa;
On it Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera sports with his Guhyakas.

42 North of Kailāsa is Maināka mountain,
And north of Maināka
Is the entrancing golden-peaked mountain Maṇimaya.

43 Near this mountain
Is the large, lovely celestial lake called Bindusara
Whose sands are golden. Rājā Bhagīratha,

44 After whom Gaṅgā is called Bhāgīrathī,
Lived here for many years
Gem-studded sacrificial posts
And golden *caitya*-trees can be found here.

45 Mahā-illustrious thousand-eyed Indra
Performed successful sacrifices here.
The lord of creatures, the eternal Creator of the worlds,

46 Enormously radiant, is worshipped here
In the presence of his spirit-attendants.
Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā, Manu, Sthāṇu-Śiva
(the fifth) are always present here.

47 Issuing from the realm of Brahmā,
The three-worlds-coursing river Gaṅgā
Makes her first appearance here,
Then she splits into seven streams:

48 Vasvokasārā
Nalinī
Sanctifying Sarasvatī
Jambūnadī
Sītā
Gaṅgā
And Sindhu.

49 The supreme Creator fashioned
This celestial, imagination-baffling river.
For thousands of yugas
People have worshipped at this site.

Transcreated by P. Lal

50 The Sarasvatī appears in some parts
And disappears in others.
The celestial, seven-sistered Gaṅgā
Is celebrated in all the three worlds.

51 Rākṣasas live on Himavant,
Guhyakas on Hemakūṭa,
Nāgas on Niṣadha,
Tapasyā-practisers on Gokarṇa;

52 Gods and anti-gods on Śveta,
Gandharvas on Niṣadha,
And, mahārāja,
Brahma-ṛṣis on Nīla,
And gods on Śṛṅgavat also.

53 Mahārāja! These are the seven *varṣa*-divisions
Of the world.
All organic and inorganic life
Can be found on them.

54 Divine achievement and human prosperity
Can be found here.
The variety is incalculable.
Those who are eager to achieve their own welfare
Keep this in mind.

55 I have described to you, O rājā,
The enchanting hare-resembling regions
About which you enquired.

56 At the other extremity are two *varṣas* –
One in the north, one in the south.
The two islands, Nāga-dvīpa and Kāśya-dvīpa,
Are the two ears of the hare.

57 O rājā! The magnificent mountain Malaya,
Whose rocks are like copper-plates
Is the other part of Jambū-dvīpa
That makes it resemble a hare."

SECTION SEVEN

1 "O mahā-intelligent Sañjaya," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"supply me all the details
of Mālyavat and Meru's eastern
and western regions."

2 "O rājā," replied Sañjaya, "south of Nīla
and north of Meru
are the sacred northern Kuru territories
where the Siddhas dwell.

3 The trees have sweet fruits;
They are always filled with flowers and fruits.
The flowers are exquisitely fragrant,
The fruits are absolutely delicious with rasa.

4 O lord of men! Some trees produce fruits that satiate
All the senses of the taster. O ruler of men!
Some trees are called the Sweet-Milkers.

5 They produce thick-milk *kṣīra*
And six milky juices that taste like ambrosia.
The trees also produce fine cloth,
And their fruits are used as ornaments.

6 The ground is strewn with precious gems
And fine golden sand, O ruler of men.
Parts of this region are ruby-radiant, diamond-dazzling,
Lovely as lapis lazuli or the petals of a lotus.

7 All the seasons are soft and sensuous.
None of its lakes is muddy:
Their waters are cool, pure, fragrant.

8 The men there are descended from the gods.
Their birth is pure, they are enchantingly handsome.

9 Male-female twins are born there;
The women there are as lovely as apsarās.

10 They drink the *kṣīra* of the Sweet-Milkers
Which is as sweet as ambrosia.
The twins grow up in harmony.

11 They have the same good looks, the same guṇas,
They wear identical dresses;
They love each other like a doting pair
Of *cakravāka* birds.

12 The people of this region are disease-free;
They are happy,
They live ten thousand and ten hundred years.

13 They are never known to forsake each other.
Mahārāja, when they die,
Mahā-powerful, sharp-beaked birds called the *bhāruṇḍas*
Sweep them away and deposit them in mountain caves.

14 I have described the Northern Kuru regions.
Now, rājā, let me describe the Eastern.

15 Of the territories, there, the region called Bhadrāśva
Is super-eminent. O lord of the earth!
It has a huge forest called the Bhadrāśva,
And in it is a huge tree called the *kālāmra*.

16 Mahārāja, it is an enchanting tree.
It is always filled with fruits and flowers.
It is a *yojana* tall.
Siddhas and Cāraṇas look after it.

17 The men there are white-skinned
And mahā-powerful and energetic.
The women have the complexion of lilies,
They are ravishing to look at.

18 They have faces like the full moon,
Their bodies are cool as moonlight.
They sing and they dance.

19 O bull-brave Bharata, their life-span
Is ten thousand years.
They drink the rasa of the *kālāmra*
And they remain young for ever.

20 South of the Nīla
And north of the Niṣadha
Is the eternal, *jambū*-tree
Called Sudarśana.

21 It is the haunt of Siddhas and Cāraṇas,
It is the sacred all-desire-fulfilling tree.
The region is called Jambū-dvīpa
After that everlasting tree.

22 O bull-brave Bharata,
It is one thousand and one hundred *yojanas* tall;
O lord of men! It is the rājā of trees;
It seems to touch heaven itself.

23 When its fruit is filled with rasa,
It ripens, bursts, and drops by itself.
Each fruit has a circumference
Of two and a half thousand cubits.

24 It falls on the ground
With a tremendous thud,
And a silvery rasa, O rājā,
Spills out of the splattered fruit.

25 The juice of the *jambū*-fruit
Becomes a river, O lord of men,
And flows around Meru mountain in *pradakṣiṇa*
And reaches the Northern Kuru territory.

26 O lord of men! To drink that juice is to be serene forever.
To drink that juice is to feel no thirst ever,
To drink that juice is never to age ever.

27 The river also produces the gold
Known as *jambūnada*,
Used in the manufacture of celestial ornaments.
It glitters with the dazzle of the *indragopaka* insect.

28 The people there have the complexion
Of the rising sun.
On Mālyavat's summit burns, perpetually,
The fire called the Samvartaka,
The all-dissolving fire of Kāla, O bull-brave Bharata.
Many small summits also make up Mālyavat.

29 Mālyavat measures five or six thousand *yojanas.*
Men living there
Have complexions of burnished gold.

30 They all descend from the realm of Brahmā,
They are all holy men,
They practise severe tapasyā,
They are sense-controlled.
They enter the realm of the day-making sun
For the protection of all created life.

31 They number sixtysix thousand.
They surround the day-making sun
And proceed in front of Aruṇa.

32 Receiving and absorbing the heat of the sun
For sixty-six thousand years,
They finally enter the maṇḍala of the moon."

SECTION EIGHT

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: "Tell me the names
of all the *varṣas,*
of the mountains and, Śañjaya,
of all who live on the mountains."

2 Śañjaya replied: "South of Śveta
and north of the Niṣadha
is the *varṣa* called Ramaṇaka.
The people who inhabit it

3 Are all white-complexioned.
They are of noble birth,
and they are handsome-looking.
They seem to have no enemies.

4 They are always cheerful and smiling.
It is said, mahārāja,
that each lives eleven thousand
five hundred years.

5 South of the Niṣadha is the territory
known as the Hiraṇmaya
through which flows the river
called Hairaṇvatī.

6 Mahārāja, that is where Garuḍa,
rājā-of-birds, lives.
The people there are handsome
and wealthy yakṣa-followers.

7 O rājā, they are mahā-powerful and contented.
It is said, O lord of men,
that the life-span of each person there
is eleven thousand

8 And five hundred years.
O lord of mortals, there is a mountain
called the Śṛṅgavat
that has three lovely peaks.

9 One is made of gold,
another of precious stones,
and the third boasts
of magnificently constructed mansions.

10 The self-luminous devī named Śāṇḍilī
lives there.
North of the Śṛṅgavat, and as far as the ocean,
O lord of men,

11 Is the territory known as Airāvata,
superior to all.
The sun does not heat it,
its men do not suffer decay.

12 It is lit by the light of the moon
and the stars.
Its people are lotus-lovely, lotus-skinned,
and lotus-leaf-eyed.

13 They have the scent of lotuses.
They eat nothing,
they roam, fragrant, self-controlled,
with unblinking eyes.

14 They are the descendants of the gods, O king,
they have no *rajas*-guṇa.
O lord of men,
it is said thirteen thousand years

15 Is the average life-span in that region,
O excellent Bharata.
North of the ocean of sweet-milk
lives the lord *prabhu*,
Vaikuṇṭha-Hari-Viṣṇu
who rides in his golden chariot.

16 It has eight wheels,
and supernatural beings ride in it;
it dazzles like fire; it is mahā-swift,
and ornamented with *jambū*-gold.

17 O bull-brave Bharata!
He is the lord of all creatures!
He is the radiant one!
He is limited, and he is limitless!
He is the doer, and he is the instrument!

18 He is earth
water
ākāśa-ether
air
fire
He is the yajña of all creatures, O earth-lord,
The sacred Hutāśana-fire is his mouth."

19 O lord of men! Listening to Sañjaya
(Vaiśampāyana continued),
mahā-minded Dhṛtarāṣṭra reflected, O rājā,
on his sons' situation.

20 And mahā-energetic Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
having reflected, said:
"Sūta's son, it is certain
that Kāla destroys the universe,

21 And Kāla re-creates the universe.
Nothing's eternal.
All-knowing Nara and Nārāyaṇa
destroy the universe.

22 The gods call him Vaikuṇṭha.
Humans call him Lord Viṣṇu."

SECTION NINE

1 "Tell me about the territory called Bhārata,"
said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"where these armies have assembled
and which my son Duryodhana covets,

2 Which the Pāṇḍavas also want,
which obsesses my mind too.
You are very intelligent,
you can tell me."

3 "Rājā," said Sañjaya, "listen to me.
The Pāṇḍavas are not covetous;
Duryodhana is.
The son of Subala, Śakuni,

4 And many other Kṣatriyas,
who are rulers of various lands,
have their eyes on this territory,
and they cannot tolerate each other.

5 O descendant of Bharata, I will tell you about Bhārata.
It is a land loved by the god Indra, and by Vivasvat's
son Manu,

6 By Vena's son Pṛthu, by mahātmā Ikṣvāku,
By Yayāti, Ambarīṣa, Māndhātā, Nahuṣa;

7 By Mucukunda, Uśīnara's son Śibi,
Ṛṣabha, Ila's son Pururavas, king Nṛga;

8 By invincible Kuśīka, mahātmā Gādhi,
Invincible Somaka, Dilīpa, and many others.

9 Mahārāja, all these and other powerful Kṣatriyas
Have deeply loved the territory of Bhārata-varṣa.

10 O foe-destroying rājā! This is the Bhārata I will now
describe.
I will explain everything exactly as you have asked met

11 Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Śuktimat, Ṛkṣavat,
Vindhya, and Pariyātra – these seven are its hilly
boundaries.

12 In addition to these, there are thousands of other mountains,
Rocky and huge and majestic, with fertile valleys.

13 There are also innumerable smaller hills, O radiant one,
Inhabited by Āryas, Kauravas, *mlecchas,* and mixed races.

14 Others live on the banks of the rivers Gaṅgā, Sindhu, Sarasvatī,
Godāvarī, Narmadā, Bāhudā, Mahānadī,

15 Śatadrū, Candrabhāgā, the mahā-river Yamunā,
Dṛṣadvatī, Vipāśā, Vipāpā, Sthūlavālukā,

16 Vetravatī, Kṛṣnaveṇā, as well as
Irāvatī, Vitastā, Payoṣṇī, Devikā,

17 Vedasmṛtā, Vedavatī, Tridivā, Ikṣulā, Kṛmi,
Krīṣiṇī, Vicitravāhā, Citrasenā,

18 Gomatī, Dhūtapāpā, the mahā-river Vandanā,
Kauśikī, Tridivā, Kṛtyā, Nicitā, Lohitāraṇī,

19 Rahasyā, Śatakumbhā, Sarayū,
Carmaṇvatī, Vetravatī, Hastisomā, Dik,

20 Śarāvatī, Payoṣṇī, Veṇā, Bhīmarathī,
Kaverī, Culuka, Vaṇī, Śatabalā,

21 Nīvārā, Ahitā, Suprayogā, O lord of men;
also Pavitrā, Kuṇḍalī, Sindhu, Rājanī, Purmālinī,

22 Pūrvābhirāma, Vīrā, Bhīmā, Oghavatī,
Pāśāśinī, Pāpahara, Mahendrā, Pāṭalavatī,

23 Karīṣiṇī, Asiknī, the mahā-river Kuśacīrā,
Makarī, Pravarā, Menā, Hemā, Ghṛtavatī,

24 Purāvati, Anuṣnā, Śaibya, Kāpī, O Bharata;
also Sadānīrā, Adhṛṣtyā, the mahā-river Kuśadhārā,

25 Sadākāntā, Śivā, Vīramatī,
Vastrā, Suvastrā, Gaurī, Kampanā, Hiraṇyavatī,

26 Varā, Vīrakarā, the mahā-river Pañcamī,
Rathacitrā, Jyotirathā, Visvāmitrā, Kupiñjalā,

27 Upendrā, Bahulā, Kuvīrā, Ambuvāhinī,
Vinadī, Piñjalā, Veṇā, the mahā-river Tuṅgaveṇā,

28 Vidiśā, Kṛṣṇaveṇā, Tāmarā, Kapilā,
Khalu, Suvāmā, Vedāśvā, Hariśrāvā, Mahāpagā,

29 Śīghrā, Picchilā, Bhāradvājī,
Kauśiki, Soṇā, Bāhudā, Candramā,

30 Durgā, Citraśilā, Brahmavedhyā, Bṛhadvatī,
Yavakṣā, Rohī, Jāmbunadī,

31 Sunasā, Tamasā, Dāsī, Vasā, Varāṇasī,
Nīlā, Dhrtamatī, the mahā-river Parṇāśā,

32 Mānavī, Vṛṣabhā, Brahmamedhyā, Bṛhaddhanī –
These, O lord of men, and many other mahā-rivers too,

33 Such as the Sadā-nirāmayā, Kṛṣṇā, Mandagā,
Mandavāhinī, Brāhmaṇī, Mahāgaurī, Durgā,
O Bharata;

34 Citropalā, Citrarathā, Mañjulā, Vāhinī,
Mandākinī, Vaitaraṇī, the mahā-river Koṣā,

35 Śuktimatī, Anaṅgā, Vṛṣā,
Lohityā, Karatoyā, Vṛṣakā,

36 Kumārī, Ṛṣikulyā, Māriṣā, Sarasvatī,
Mandākinī, Supuṇyā, Sarvā, Gaṅgā, O Bharata.

37 These are the mahā-fruitful mothers of the universe.
There are hundreds of thousands of other rivers.

38 O rājā! I have mentioned only the one that I remember.
Let me now give you the names of the territories:

39 The Kuru-Pāñcāla, Śālva, Mādreya-Jaṅgala,
Śurasena, Pulinda, Bodha, Māla,

40 Matsya, Kuśalya, Śauśalya, Kunti, Kānti, Kosala,
Cedi, Matsya, Karuṣa, Bhoja, Sindhu, Pulinda,

41 Uttamāśva, Daśārṇa, Mekala, Utkala,
Pāñcāla, Kosala, Naikapṛṣṭha, Dhuraṁdhara,

42 Godhā, Madrakaliṅga, Kāśī, Aparakāśī,
Jaṭhara, Kukkura, Daśārṇa, O Bharata; also

43 Kuṇti, Avanti, Aparakunti,
Gomanta, Mandaka, Śaṇḍa, Vidarbha, Rūpavāhika,

44 Aśmaka, Pāṇḍurāṣṭra, Goparāṣṭra, Kariti,
Adhirājya, Kuśādya, Mallarāṣṭra,

45 Varavāsya, Ayavāha, Cakra, Cakrati, Śaka,
Videha, Magadha, Svakṣa, Malaja, Vijaya,

46 Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Yakṛlloma,
Malla, Sudeṣṇa, Prahlāda, Māhika, Śaśika,

47 Bāhlīka, Vāṭadhāna, Abhira, Kālatoyaka,
Aparanta, Parānta, Pāñcāla, Carmamaṇḍala,

48 Ataviśikhara, Merubhūta, O powerful lord;
also Upāvṛtta, Anupāvṛtta, Svarāṣṭra, Kekaya,

49 Kundāparānta, Moheya, Kakṣa, Sāmudraniṣkuṭa,
Many-peopled Andhra, and Antargiri.

50 Bāhirgiri, Aṅgamalaya, Magadha, Mānavarjaka,
Samantara, Prāvṛṣeya, Bhārgava, O lord of men; also

51 Puṇḍra, Bharga, Kirāta, Sudṛṣṭa, Yāmuna,
Śaka, Nisāda, Niṣadha, Ānarta, Nairṛta,

52 Durgāla, Pratimatsya, Kuntala, Kosala,
Tiragraha, Śūrasena, Ījika, Kanyakāguṇa,

53 Tilabhāra, Masīra, Madhumat, Sukandaka,
Kāśmīra, Sindhusavīra, Gāndhāra, Darśaka,

54 Abhisāra, Ulūta, Saivāla, Bāhlika,
Dārvī, Vānava, Darva, Vātaja, Amaratha, Uraga,

55 Bhauvādya, Sudāma, Sumallika,
Vadhra, Karīṣaka, Kulinda, Upatyaka,

56 Vanāyu, Daśa, Pārśvaroma, Kuśabindu,
Kaccha, Gopālakakṣa, Jāṅgala, Kuruvarṇaka,

57 Kirāta, Barbara, Siddha, Vaideha, Tamraliptaka,
Uṇḍra, Mleccha, Saisiridhra, and Pārvatīya,
O powerful lord.

[VI:9:58-71]

Transcreated by P. Lal

58 O bull-brave Bharata, there are other territories,
in the south:
Draviḍa, Kerala, Prācya, Bhūṣika, Vanavāsika,

59 Karṇāṭaka, Mahiṣaka, Vikalpa, Mūṣaka,
Jhillika, Kuntala, Sauhṛda, Navakānana,

60 Kaukuṭṭaka, Cola, Koṅkaṇa, Mālava, Nara,
Samanga, Karaka, Aṅgāra, Māriṣa,

61 Dhvajini, Utsavasaṃketa, Trigarta, Śālvaseni,
Vyūka, Kokabaka, Proṣṭha, Samavegavaśa,

62 Vindhyaculika, Pulinda, Valkala.
Mālava, Ballava, Aparaballava,

63 Kulinda, Kālada, Kuṇḍala, Karaṭa,
Mūṣaka, Stanabāla, Sānipa, Ghaṭa, Sṛñjaya,

64 Aṭhida, Pāśivāṭa, Tanaya, Sunaya,
Ṛṣika, Vindabha, Kāka, Taṅgana, Parataṅgana;

65 Uttara, the cruel Aparamleccha, O excellent Bharata,
Yavana, Cīna, and authoritarian Kāmboja,

66 Sukṛdgraha, Kulattha, Hūṇa, Pārāsika,
Ramaṇa, Cīna, Daśamālika;

67 The territories of Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras;
Śūdra, Abhira, Darada, Kāśmīra, Paśu,

68 Khāśira, Antacāra, Pahlava, Girigahvara,
Ātreya, Bharadvāja, Stanaposika,

69 Proṣaka, Kaliṅga, the territories of the Kirātas,
Tomara, Hanyamāna, Karbhañjaka and others

70 These and other territories in the east and north
Have, my lord, been briefly described by me.

71 If this earth is cherished with strength and guṇa-talent,
She is a mahā-flower of prosperity,
She is the wish-fulfilling cow.
(Three streams of milk, dharma, *artha* and kāma,
flow from her.)

72 Valiant rājās, learned in dharma-and-*artha*,
Covet the earth.
For the sake of success and pleasure,
They are prepared even to die on the battlefield.

73 This earth satisfies the kāma
Of beings with god-bodies and human-bodies.
It is the final shelter.

74 O finest of the Bharatas!
Like dogs snarling over a chunk of meat,
These rājās are squabbling over this earth.

75 And they cannot be satiated.
The Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas will employ
Negotiation, trickery, placation through gifts, and war
To achieve their ambition.

76 But if this earth is graciously treated,
O bull-brave hero,
She is the father
the mother
the children
the sky
the heaven
of all creatures."

SECTION TEN

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"The dwellers of Bhārata-varṣa and Haimata-varṣa –
Their merits and defects,
Their span of life and their capabilities,

2 Their past, present, and future –
Explain everything to me, Sañjaya.
And explain everything about the dwellers
of Hari-varṣa as well."

3 Sañjaya replied: "O enhancer of Kaurava glory!
O bull-brave Bharata!
Four yugas encompass Bhārata-varṣa:
Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali.

[VI:10:4-13]

Transcreated by P. Lal

4 The first is Kṛta-yuga;
Then comes Tretā, followed by Dvāpara,
And, finally, Kali.

5 O excellent Kaurava, finest of rājās,
The ideal life-span in the Kṛta-yuga
Is said to be four thousand years.

6 In Tretā it is said to be three thousand.
In the present yuga, the Dvāpara,
It is two thousand years.

7 O bull-brave Bharata,
There is no fixed life-span in the Kali-yuga.
Children die even in wombs,
Or immediately after birth.

8 Hundreds and thousands of human beings,
Mahā-powerful and mahā-good and wise,
Possessing all the guṇas, are born

9 In the Kṛta-yuga, O rājā –
And pleasing to look at, too.
Men rich in the wealth of tapasyā
Are born, suited for hermithood.

10 Having mahā-enthusiasm,
Mahātmās, men of dharma, truth-speakers
Pleasing to look at, mahā-heroic, expert archers,

11 Eminently deserving of boons,
Brave in war, O rājā,
Are the Kṣatriyas of the Tretā-yuga,
The cakravartin-emperors of the age.

12 In the Dvāpara-Yuga,
Are born men of miscellaneous types.
They are brave, mahā-resourceful,
And eager to exercise authority over each other.

13 O Bharata! The people born in Kali-yuga
Have limited energies;
They are easily provoked, greedy, and untruthful.

14 O Bharata! Their dominant characteristics are:
Jealousy, pride, anger, māyā-proneness,
Hatred, and greed.

15 O rājā, ruler of men,
Very little remains of the Dvāpara-yuga.
Haimavata-varṣa is superior to Bharata-varṣa,
And Hari-varṣa is superior to Haimvata-varṣa."

SECTION ELEVEN

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"Sañjaya, you have described Jambūkhaṇḍa:
Tell me about its size and dimensions.

2 I also want to know
The dimensions of the oceans,
Of Śāka-dvīpa, Kuśa-dvīpa,

3 Śālmali-dvīpa, and Krauñca-dvipa.
Son of Gavalgaṇa,
Tell me about Rāhu, Soma and Sūrya also."

4 Sañjaya replied:
"O rājā, this earth is full of islands.
I will describe only seven of them,
And the moon, sun and planets.

5 Lord of the world,
The Jambū-territory mountain covers an area
Of eighteen thousand six hundred *yojanas.*

6 The salt ocean is double that, it is said.
It is full of kingdoms.
It is rich with gems and pearls.

7 It is surrounded by mineral-rich mountains.
It is circular.
It is inhabited by Siddhas and Cāraṇas.

8 O descendant of the Kauravas,
Let me give you the details of Śāka-dvīpa.
Listen carefully, lord of the earth.

9 That island is twice the area of Jambū-dvīpa.
The ocean, mahārāja,
Is twice the size of Śāka-dvīpa.

10 O excellent Bharata,
Śāka-dvīpa is surrounded by the sweet-milk sea.
It lands are holy, its people never die.

11 They are patient, forgiving and noble.
There is never any famine there.
O bull-brave Bharata,
I have given you a brief account of Śāka-dvīpa.

12 What else would you like to know, mahārāja?"
Dhṛtarāṣṭra replied:
"You have presented Śāka-dvīpa to me briefly.

13 O mahā-wise one, explain to me its details."
Sañjaya replied:
"Rājā, that island has seven gem-rich mountains,

14 And many mines of precious stones.
And many rivers, whose names I will supply.
Everything there is holy and replete with guṇas.

15 The main mountain there, Meru,
Is the resort of gods and gandharvas.
Mahārāja, the next mountain is Malaya,
And it extends eastwards.

16 There clouds are born, and from there
They disperse in all directions.
Next, O Kaurava, is the mahā-mountain called
Jaladhāra

17 From where Vāsava-Indra collects water
Of the purest quality.
That is the source from where, O lord of men,
We get the monsoon rains.

18 Next is the massive mountain Raivataka,
And Pitāmaha-Brahmā has so arranged
That the Revatī constellation is always above it.

19 Towards the north
Is the mahā-mountain called Śyāma,
Shining like a newly-formed cloud,
Tall and dark-grey.

20 Dark-grey also are the people who live there."
Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"This is a mahā-puzzle, Sañjaya – Sūta's son,
Why are the people who live there dark-grey?"

21 "Mahārāja, descendant of the Kauravas," replied Sañjaya,
"Fair-skinned and dark-skinned people
Are found on all islands,
As well as mixed races, O king.

22 Because all the people there are dark-grey, O Bharata,
The mountain is called Śyāma the Dark-Grey One.
It is the mountain of Bhagavān Krishna.

23 Next to it is the high mountain Durgaśaila;
Then the mountain is called Kesara,
Because *kesara*-fragrant breezes blow from it.

24 It is twice as large as its neighbour.
There are seven territories on this island.

25 The territory of mahā-Meru is Mahākāśa,
Near Malaya is Kumudottara, mahārāja, near Jaladhāra is Sukumāra.

26 Raivataka's territory is called Sukumāra also,
And Śyāma's is Maṇikāñcana.
Kesara's territory is Modākī.
The next mountain is called Mahāpumān.

27 It straddles the island;
In the centre of the island, O Kaurava,
Is a massive tree as big as Jambū-dvīpa.

28 The tree is called Śāka.
It is a sacred tree, mahārāja.
Śaṁkara-Śiva is offered pūjā in that sacred territory.

29 Siddhas, Cāraṇas, and gods visit it.
The people there are full of dharma,
And the four castes, O Bharata rājā,

30 In that territory perform their sva-karma
In perfect harmony.
Mahārāja, there are no thieves,
There is no old age, no death,
The people live long lives.

31 The people there are prosperous like monsoon rivers
Flowing to the ocean.
The holy Gaṅgā flows through that territory.

32 Sukumārī, Kumārī, Śītāsī, Veṇikā,
Maṇijala, and many other mahā-rivers, O Kaurava,

33 Including the Cakṣuvardhanikā, excellent Bharata,
Purify the territory with their holy waters,
O enhancer of Kaurava glory.

34 There are hundreds of thousands of such rivers,
Whose waters Vāsava-Indra showers as rain.
Impossible to name them all,
Impossible to give the dimensions of all.

35 They are all holy rivers,
They are all defect-removers.
The island is divided into four sacred regions;

36 Maṅga, Maśaka, Mānasa, Mandaga,
Brahmins live in Maṅga,
And are involved in their sva-karma.

37 Many dharma-following Kṣatriyas
Live in Maśaka, O rājā,
And they grant all the wishes of favour-seekers.
Vaiśyas live in Mānasa.

38 They are all brave desire-fufillers
And dharma-and-artha upholders.
Śūdras live in Mandaga;
They also are followers of dharma.

39 O Indra among rājās, there
There is no rājā,
No punishment,
No one deserving to be punished.
People of dharma,
They practise sva-dharma
And protect and cherish each other.

40 This is all there is to know
About the island called Śāka,
A powerful and mahā-radiant territory."

SECTION TWELVE

1 Sañjaya said:
"I will now tell you, Kaurava maharāja,
About the islands that lie in the north.
Listen to me.

2 There is the ocean of ghee.
Then comes the ocean of curd.
Then the ocean of wine,
And finally the ocean of water.

3 As they go further north, mahārāja, O lord of men,
The islands grow progressively double.
They are surrounded by these oceans.

4 The centre mahā-island island is made of red arsenic;
It is called Gaura, O king.
On the western island is the mountain Kṛṣṇā,
A spot dear to Nārāyaṇa.

5 There Keśava-Krishna keeps guard over celestial jewels.
When he is pleased,
He dispenses prosperity to people from that place.

6 The kuśa-grass of Kuśadvīpa
And the *śālmali*-tree of Śālmali territory
Are objects of pūjā for the people who live there.

7 In Krauñca-dvīpa is the mountain Mahakrauñca,
A treasure-house of gems and minerals,
Which, mahārāja, is also a place of pūjā for the four
castes.

8 There one sees the massive mountain Gomanta,
Rich with metals and minerals, O rājā.
There dwells the Lotus-Eyed Lord of Prosperity,

9 *Prabhu*-Nārāyaṇa-Hari, with those who have
attained mokṣa.
O Indra-among-rājās,
In Kuśadvipa is a red-mineral mountain

10 Called Sudhāmā – an inaccessible peak,
Made of gold.
Another radiant mountain, O Kaurava,
Is called Kumuda.

11 The fourth mountain is Puṣpavān,
The fifth Kuśaśeya,
The sixth Harigiri.
These are the six important mountains.

12 The space between these mountains
Progressively doubles as one proceeds northwards.
The first territory is called Udbhid,
The second Veṇumaṇḍala,

13 The third is Surathā, the fourth Kambala,
The fifth Dhṛtimat, the sixth Prabhākara,

14 The seventh Kapila. Seven territories,
O lord of the world,
In them the gods, gandharvas, and other world-beings

15 Enjoy themselves. They do not die.
O king! There are no robbers and no *mlecchas.*

16 O lord of men! The people are all good-looking
and fair-skinned.
O earth-lord! Let me explain everything about them.

17 Mahārāja, I will repeat what I have heard.
Listen carefully.
On Krauñcadvīpa is the massive mountain Krauñca.

18 Next to Krauñca is Vāmanaka,
Next to Vāmana is Andhakāraka, O rājā.
Next to Andhakāraka is the finest of mountains
Called Maināka, O rājā.

19 O rājā, next to Maināka is the excellent mountain
Govinda,
And next to Govinda is the mountain called
Nibiḍa, O rājā.

20 The space between these mountains
Progressively doubles as one proceeds northwards.
Let me describe their territories. Listen carefully,

21 The territory near Karuñca is Kuśala,
Near Vāmana is Manonuga. And,
O glory of the Kauravas,
After Manonuga comes the territory called Uṣṇa.

22 After Uṣṇa comes Pravāraka,
After Pravāraka is Andhakāraka,
After Andhakāraka is Munideśa.

23 After Munideśa comes Dundubhisvana,
O lord of men,
Where Siddhas and Cāraṇas live.
The people of this region are fair-complexioned.

24 Mahārāja, all these territories
Are inhabited by gods and gandharvas.
On the island of Puṣkara
Is the gem-and-mineral-rich mountain Puṣkara.

25 Living on that mountain
Is Deva Prajāpati Brahmā, Lord of creatures,
Worshipped by gods and mahā-ṛṣis

26 With the pūjā of sweet words and homage.
The gems of Jambūdvīpa are seen here, O lord of men.

[VI:12:27-36]

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27 The people of these islands, O excellent Kaurava,
Are staunch practisers of brahmacarya,
They are disciplined, they speak the truth.

28 In these matters too the intensity
Doubles progressively as we proceed northwards.
These islands actually make up one vast territory.
In all these different regions, O Bharata rājā,
There is actually a single dharma.

29 Mahārāja! The Lord of creatures, Prajāpati,
the Lord of chastisement,
Lives there and protects his subjects.

30 O rājā! He is their rājā
their auspicious lord
their father
their grandsire.
O finest of men!
He is the favouring one
their guardian from beginning to end.

31 O mahā-muscled Kaurava!
Food is self-cooked on these islands,
And eaten daily by the inhabitants.

32 After these territories is the region
Known as Samā; mahārāja,
It has four corners and thirty-three maṇḍalas.

33 O Kaurava! O finest of the Bharatas!
Here are the four splendid elephants:
Vāmana, Airāvata,

34 Supratīka, with rutting temples,
And another, O rājā.
Impossible for me to calculate their sizes:

35 The height, breadth and circumference
Of these lands are all undetermined.
Winds blow freely in these territories.

36 These elephants catch the winds
In the lotus-bright mahā-cavities of their trunks.
Having caught them,

37 They exhale them with great force.
And so these tremendous winds
Blow all over the earth.

38 Mahārāja, creatures breathe with these winds."
Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"Sañjaya, you have described in great detail

39 The location of these islands.
Sañjaya! Tell me the rest."
Sañjaya replied:
"Mahārāja, I have described the islands.

40 Let me now, mahārāja, explain
The heavenly bodies to you.
It is said, O excellent Kaurava,
That Svarbhānu or Rāhu is globular.

41 O defectless one! Its diameter is twelve thousand *yojanas*,
And its circumference is fortytwo thousand *yojanas*.

42 That is what the learned ancients say.
The moon's diameter is eleven thousand *yojanas*.

43 Its circumference is thirty-eight thousand nine hundred *yojanas*.
These are the dimensions of the mahātmā cool-rayed planet.

44 O delighter of the Kauravas, O rājā,
It is said the diameter of the sun
Is ten thousand *yojanas*,

45 And the circumference of the generous, swift, radiant body
Is thirty-five thousand eight hundred *yojanas*, O defectless rājā.

46 These are the dimensions of the sun, O Bharata.
Rāhu, of enormous size, covers

47 Both sun and moon during eclipses.
This I have explained in brief, mahārāja,
Through the eyes of the śāstras.

48 Having heard all this,
Pacify yourself.
Having listened to the dimensions of the earth,

49 O Kaurava, curb the ambitions of your son
Duryodhana.
O excellent Bharata! Whichever rājā listens
attentively to this Bhūmi-parva –

50 He obtains the the fruition of his desires;
His strength, fame, age, and energy increase.

51 Whoever listens respectfully to the details
Of this parva on the full-moon and the new-moon
Pleases his fathers and pitamāha-ancestors.

52 I have described to you the merits that accrue
From the territory of Bhārata-varṣa
In which we all live."

SECTION THIRTEEN

1 Descendant of Bharata (continued Vaiśampāyana),
learned Sañjaya, son of Gavalgaṇa,
who saw present, past, future,
all as present,

2 Rushed back to grieving Dhṛtarāṣṭra
and announced sadly the news
that Pitāmaha-Bhīṣma had died
on the field.

3 "O bull-brave Bharata mahārāja!" said Sañjaya.
"I am Sañjaya. *Namaste.*
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma, the Kaurava grandsire,
is dead.

4 The Kaurava grandsire, finest of warriors,
paragon of bowmen,
lies dead,
sprawled on a bed of arrows.

5 O rājā! Brave Bhīṣma, whose strength
backed your sons
in the dice-game, has been killed
by Śikhaṇḍin.

6 Mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma, in a single chariot,
once routed
all the lords of the earth
gathered in Kāśi.

7 Whom even Jamadagni's son Paraśurāma
could not kill –
he has been killed today in battle
by Śikhaṇḍin.

8 He was strong like Mahendra-Indra,
patient like the earth,
firm as the Himavant hills,
profound like the ocean.

9 Arrows were his teeth,
the bow was his mouth,
the sword his tongue, –
and Śikhaṇḍin has killed him.

10 When he prepared for battle,
the mahā-Pāṇḍava-army
trembled in fear,
like cattle confronted by a lion.

11 The foe-slaying heroic sun
who protected your soldiers
for ten nights with incredible feats
has today set.

12 He serenely shot arrows in thousands,
like Śakra-Indra;
he killed ten thousand soldiers daily
for ten days –

13 Today he is dead, undeservingly so.
His enemies, O Bharata rājā,
have killed him, a wind-whipped tree
supine on the ground."

SECTION FOURTEEN

1 "How was the bull-brave Kaurava Bhīṣma,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"killed by Śikhaṇḍin?
How did this second Vāsava-Indra topple?

2 Sañjaya, what did my sons do
when celibate Bhīṣma,
who was like a god,
was taken away from their midst?

3 When mahā-powerful mahā-wise and mahā-bowman
lion-among-men Bhīṣma fell,
how did it affect the morale
of our soldiers?

4 You tell me the finest Kaurava
is no more with us,
the never-retreating bull-brave hero is killed.
I suffer, I suffer.

5 Tell me, when he attacked,
who guarded his rear, Sañjaya,
who his front? who protected his flanks,
who fought alongside?

6 Name me the great heroes
who assisted that bull-brave Kṣatriya,
that brilliant lion-like chariot-warrior
when he pierced the enemy's ranks.

7 Like the sun scattering darkness,
Bhīṣma routed his foes;
his prowess was thousand-rayed,
he spread terror everywhere.

8 When he attacked, tell me –
which Pāṇḍava warriors opposed him?
He was a hero who could crush
all opposition.

9 What was the strategy of the Pāṇḍavas, Sañjaya,
to frustrate
the fierce attacks of the invincible hero,
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma

10 Whose arrows were teeth,
whose bow was an open mouth,
whose fierce sword was his tongue –
how was such

11 A lion-among-men defeated by Kaunteya-Arjuna
on the field?
He did not deserve defeat,
none ever defeated him before.

12 He was the remarkable hero who,
stationed in his chariot,
sliced off his enemies' heads,
and did not boast about it.

13 He was like the fires of Cosmic Time Kala
on the day of doom;
seeing him fighting, the Pāṇḍavas mahā-army
scattered in terror.

14 For ten days that great foe-crusher
wrought havoc
in the Pāṇḍavas' ranks;
now he has set, like the sun.

15 With an endless shower of arrows,
he annihiliated
a hundred million soldiers in ten days –
as Śakra-Indra did.

16 He now lies on the ground inert,
like a wind-whipped tree.
Though he did not deserve it,
Bhīṣma of the Bharatas is dead.

17 How did the soldiers of the Pāñcālas
dare oppose
the fearsome military prowess
of the son of Śāntanu?

18 Teil me, Sañjaya, how the Pāṇḍavas fought
against Bhīṣma.
How is it possible that Droṇa is alive,
and Bhīṣma dead?

19 How could Bhīṣma, unparalleled warrior,
die when Kṛpa was there
to protect him, when Bhāradvāja-Droṇa was there
to protect him?

20 How is it possible that this paragon
of chariot-heroes, Bhīṣma,
whom the gods could not harm,
was killed by Śikhaṇḍin?

21 He was equipped to fight
Jamadagni's son Paraśurāma.
Even Paraśurāma could not defeat him,
he was so like Śakra-Indra.

22 How could a mahā-chariot-hero like Bhīṣma
die in battle?
I am confused. I want all the details
from you, Sañjaya.

23 Explain to me, Sañjaya, which bowmen
of my army defended him?
Who obeyed Duryodhana's orders
to protect him?

24 Sañjaya! When the Pāṇḍavas, led by Śikhaṇḍin,
attacked Bhīṣma,
which Kauravas stood firmly by the side
of Bhīṣma?

25 My heart must be made of steel
not to crack
when it hears of the death
of lion-among-men Bhīṣma.

26 He had truth, intelligence and ingenuity;
he had them in abundance;
how did they succeed in killing
that bull-brave Bharata?

27 He was like a mahā-cloud.
The twang of his bowstring was the cloud roaring.
The arrows were a shower of rain.
The sound of the bow was thunder reverberating.

28 Like thunderbolt-wielding Indra the Dānavas,
so Bhīṣma scattered
the Pāṇḍavas, Pāñcālas, and Śṛñjayas
with his arrows.

29 He was a surging ocean of weapons,
An awesome ocean;
The bows were the waves,
The arrows were the crocodiles;
An endless restless ocean,
Islandless and raftless,
An uncrossable ocean,

30 Where maces and swords were the sharks,
Where horses and elephants were the whirlpools,
Where soldiers were the thousands of fishes,
An ocean that reverberated with the noises
Of conch-shells and *dundubhi*-drums;

31 And Bhīṣma's wrath,
The subterranean fire of the ocean,
Drowned all his enemies in hundreds of thousands,
Consuming all opposition.

32 Like the shores holding back the ocean,
Bhīṣma stood firm,
Restricting with his blazing anger
The advance of his foes.

33 Who protected his front
when foe-punishing Bhīṣma
performed wonderful feats
for the sake of Duryodhana?

34 Who protected the right wheel
of the mighty hero?
Who covered his rear
from the attacks of his foes?

35 Who stood firm closest to him?
Which warriors
placed themselves as defenders
of his left wheel?

36 Which left-wheel defenders repulsed
the Sṛñjaya sorties?
And who were the ones who provided
over-all cover, Sañjaya?

37 Who covered the deep flanks
of this departed hero?
Sañjaya! Who took exceptional risks
in the course of defending him?

38 How is it possible that he failed
to defeat his enemies
in spite of his comprehensive
military support?

39 Sañjaya! How was it possible for the Pāṇḍavas
to strike down a hero
who was like all-world-lord
Parameṣṭhin-Prajāpati-Brahmā himself?

40 Sañjaya, do you expect me to believe
that the island-of-refuge,
the lion-among-men all-in-all of the Kauravas,
heroic Bhīṣma is dead?

41 Relying on his massive strength,
my son dared to defy the Pāṇḍavas.
Am I to believe
Bhīṣma has been killed?

42 In the distant past, when the gods
fought against the Dānavas,
they sought the help
of my mahā-strict-vowed *pitā*.

43 Whose birth freed Śāntanu
from grief, regret, and despair –
that auspicious son, that mahā-valiant hero
of incredible lustre –

44 That self-dharma-following, refuge-providing,
pure knower of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas –
am I to believe
that he has been killed?

45 He knew the entire science of weapons.
He was gentle,
He was self-controlled,
He was firm.
When I hear Śāntanu's son is dead,
I consider my army dead.

46 I think adharma has overcome dharma:
the Pāṇḍavas are unscrupulous –
they kill their old guru
for a kingdom.

47 In the duel over Ambā,
Paraśurāma, Jamadgani's son,
unexcelled arms-expert,
was routed by brave Bhīṣma.

48 You say Indra-equalling, finest-of-heroes
Pitāmaha Bhīṣma has been killed.
Can there be for me
any greater grief?

49 Whom even foe-slaying Paraśurāma,
Jamadagni's son
who slaughtered the entire Kṣatriya race
in a battle,

50 Could not kill – he has been killed today
by Śikhaṇḍin.
It follows that the incredibly puissant,
mahā-heroic Śikhaṇḍin,

51 Drupada's son, in energy and radiance and valour,
is superior to Paraśurāma,
because the all-weapons expert
Bhīṣma,

52 The bull-brave Bharata, has been killed by him
on the battlefield.
Which warriors faithfully assisted foe-destroying
all-weapons-expert Bhīṣma?

53 How did Bhīṣma clash with the Pāṇḍavas?
Without Bhīṣma, Sañjaya,
my army is like a wife
without a protecting husband.

54 My army is a herd of cattle
without a cowherd.
When that acme of masculine strength
in the worlds

55 Was killed,
how was my army's morale affected?
Sañjaya, what is the point
in carrying on living

56 When we have allowed our grandsire,
the world's finest man of dharma,
to be killed? We must grieve,
as grieve those
who, waiting to be ferried across,
see their boat sink.

57 So must my sons mourn
the death of Bhīṣma.
If seems to me, Sañjaya,
that my heart is made of stone,

58 Because it does not burst with grief.
Bhīṣma is dead,
that wise and experienced and bull-brave
lion-among-men.

59 How was it possible to kill that man?
Neither weapons,
nor courage, nor tapasyā, nor intelligence,
nor arms-skill,

60 Nor firmness, nor gifts,
are defence against death.
There is no mahā-power like that of Kāla
in this universe.

61 That is why, Sañjaya, you can say
Śāntanu-Bhīṣma is dead.
Seeing my sons helpless now,
I am stricken with mahā-grief,

62 Because I had great hopes
that Bhīṣma would save them.
Sañjaya, when, like a fallen sun
on the ground,

63 Bhīṣma lay, to whom did Duryodhana turn
for help?
When I think of all this,
I begin to wonder

64 If any of us is going to survive
this battle.
What a terrible Kṣatriya dharma it is,
endorsed by the ṛṣis –

65 That the Pāṇḍavas should covet a kingdom
by killing Bhīṣma,
that we should covet the same kingdom
by accepting his death.

66 My sons and Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons are true
to Kṣatriya dharma –
no blame attaches to them.
In a crisis, one's duty, Sañjaya,

67 Is to be strong and unflinching,
even as Bhīṣma was.
Bhīṣma was modest despite the fact
that he was invincible.

68 How did the Pāṇḍavas range their troops
against Śāntanu-Bhīṣma?
What was his strategy to repulse
his mahātmā foes?

69 Tell me, Sañjaya, the exact manner
in which they killed Bhīṣma.
Duryodhana, Karṇa,
and Subala's Śakuni,

70 And Duḥśāsana – what did they say
when he died?
Where men, horses, and elephants were
the dice-board,

71 Where arrows, javelins, swords, and *śaktis*
were the dice –
when they entered that frightening hall
of war-games –

72 Tell me, which bull-brave gamblers staked
their very lives,
who lost in the dice-game,
and who won?

73 Who, besides Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma,
lost in the game?
News of Devavrata-Bhīṣma's death
has taken away my peace, Sañjaya –

74 My father, Bhīṣma,
the renowned hero of fearful feats.
In my heart I feel all my sons
will perish.

75 You have made my grief flare up, Sañjaya,
like fire fed with ghee.
So gigantic was the task
of world-famed

76 Bhīṣma's – and he is dead –
and my sons sorrow-stricken.
Describe the despair that Duryodhana's deeds
have produced!

77 Tell me, Sañjaya, in precise detail
what occurred
as a result of my wicked son's
great ignorance.

78 Right or wrong, tell me everything.
All that Bhīṣma,
in his consuming desire to win,
did on the field, Sañjaya,

79 Whatever that omni-skilled warrior did,
tell me everything.
How was the Kaurava-Pāṇḍava
battle fought?

80 Be specific about the time,
The feats, and other details."

SECTION FIFTEEN

1 Mahārāja (said Sañjaya),
your questions deserve respect.
But you should not put the blame
on Duryodhana.

2 If a man suffers
by his own conduct,
he should not say
it is the fault of others.

3 Mahārāja, the man whose misdeeds harm
other men
deserves to be killed
for pernicious misbehaviour.

4 The Pāṇḍavas are unfamiliar with malice.
They depended on you
and endured indignities,
when exiled in the forest.

5 Horses and elephants
and incredibly puissant rājās,
whatever I have seen
by my power of yoga –

6 Let me tell you of them, O lord of men.
Control your grief.
All I tell you was ordained,
it had to happen.

7 I namaskāra your father,
the learned son of Parāśara!
Through the grace of Vyāsa
has this divine knowledge

8 Become mine, this long-distance hearing
and vision, O rājā,
this insight into people's minds
and into past and future,

9 This power of flying in *ākāśa*-space,
this knowledge of law-breaker's ways,
this immunity to war-weapons –
all boons granted by mahātmā Vyāsa.

10 Listen to me as I tell you
of the supremely fascinating
and horripilating battle that was fought
by the Bharatas.

11 The armies stood ready in war-formation.
Then, mahārāja,
Duryodhana approached Duḥśāsana
and said to him:

12 "Duḥśāsana, order the chariots forward
for the defence of Bhīṣma.
Ready all our troops
for attack.

13 What I imagined for many years
has finally happened –
the Pāṇḍava and Kaurava armies
stand face to face.

14 Nothing matters more now
than how to defend Bhīṣma.
Single-handed, he can kill the Pāṇḍavas,
Somakas and Sṛñjayas.

15 The pure-ātmaned Bhīṣma has said,
'I will not kill Śikhaṇḍin.
I will spare him
because he was once a girl.'

16 Take special care therefore
to protect brave Bhīṣma.
Order my soldiers to do everything possible
to kill Śikhaṇḍin.

17 Order the best troops from north,
south, east, and west
to defend Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
at all costs.

18 Unprotected, even a mahā-lion
is prey to a wolf.
We must not allow jackal-Śikhaṇḍin
to kill lion-Bhīṣma.

19 Yudhāmanyu guards the left,
and Uttamaujas Arjuna's right.
Under cover of these two,
Phālguna-Arjuna protects Śikhaṇḍin.

20 Therefore, do whatever's necessary
so that Śikhaṇḍin,
whom Arjuna protects and Bhīṣma won't harm,
doesn't kill Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma."

SECTION SIXTEEN

1 The night passed (continued Sañjaya),
and the kings
noisily exhorted their soldiers,
"To arms! To arms!"

2 O decendant of Bharata,
the lion-roars of conches and drums,
the horses' whinnying,
the chariots' clatter,

3 The trumpeting of elephants,
the yelling of heroes,
the slapping of arm-pits, warriors shouting –
a deafening din!

4 By sunrise, mahārāja,
the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava hosts
had completed all the preliminaries
for battle.

5 O Indra-among-rājās,
you sons and the Pāṇḍavas
brandished their fearful weapons
and their glittering armour.

6 In the light of the morning sun,
O Bharata,
the weapons of your sons and of the Pāṇḍavas
were a blinding dazzle.

7 Your elephants and chariots,
decorated with gold from the Jambū river,
dazzled like clouds
flecked with lightning.

8 The innumerable chariots in battle-array
looked like cities,
with your father Bhīṣma presiding
like the full moon.

9 The soldiers wielding bows, swords, scimitars,
maces, spears, lances
and other shining weapons
took up battle stations.

10 Foot-soldiers, elephants, chariot-heroes
and horse-warriors
stood in hundreds and thousands,
looking like an intricate net.

11 Thousands of richly-colourful flags
of your sons
and the Pāṇḍava armies
fluttered on the battlefield.

12 Gold-and-gem-ornamented, fire-resplendent,
the thousands
of elephant-warriors waved
their different gleaming flags.

13 The flags flapped and gleamed
like flags in Mahendra-Indra's heaven.
They faced each other on the field,
like glowing flames.

14 Fully armed, they stood,
with eyes large like those of bulls,
with quivers and finger-guards,
shining in splendour.

15 Subala's son Śakuni, Śalya, Jayadratha of the Sindhus,
Vinda and Anuvinda, Kaikeya, Sudakṣiṇa of the
Kāmbojas,

16 Śrutāyudha of Kaliṅga, king Jayatsena,
Bṛhadbala of Kośala, Kṛtavarman of the Sātvatas –

17 These ten tigers-among-men,
performers of yajñas with large *dakṣiṇās*,
led an army consisting
of one *akṣauhiṇī* each.

18 These and other highly-disciplined rājās,
all chariot-heroes,
considering themselves part of the huge army
of Duryodhana,

19 Stationed themselves strategically,
as planned in advance.
They wore black deerskin.
They were strong, war-expert,

20 And ready to go to the realm of Brahmā
for the sake of Duryodhana.
Ten heroes with ten armies –
ready for battle!

21 The eleventh army of the Kauravas
headed these –
and it was commanded by Bhīṣma,
Śāntanu's son.

22 Mahārāja, we saw Bhīṣma
wearing a white helmet,
white armour, under a white umbrella –
like the full moon.

23 Bhīṣma stood in his silver chariot,
his white palm-tree-symbolled flag
fluttering.
The Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas,

24 The Sṛñjayas, Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and other great bowmen watched Bhīṣma
like helpless deer
spellbound by a mahā-lion

25 With wide-open jaws.
The followers of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
were terrified.
The eleven *akṣauhiṇīs* of your army

26 And the seven of the Pāṇḍavas
were powerfully protected.
Like two crocodile-and-*makara*-agitated
fearsome-to-behold

27 Oceans at yuga-end, the two armies
faced each other,
agitating huge whirlpools.
O rājā, we never saw
or heard of two such armies
as those of the Kauravas.

SECTION SEVENTEEN

1 Exactly as Bhagavan Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa
had predicted
(Sañjaya continued),
the armies confronted each other.

2 The battle began the day Soma entered
the Maghā *pitṛ*-realms:
the seven mahā-planets blazed in the sky
like large fires.

3 The sun rose, split in two, it seemed.
High in the sky,
a fierce incandescence
seemed to proliferate.

4 From the intense radiance
emanated the weird cries
of jackals and crows
awaiting a feast of corpses.

5 Each morning the Kaurava Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
and Bhāradvaja-Droṇa
rose and, concentrating their mental energies,
said:

6 "Victory to Pāṇḍu's sons!"
They fought for your sake,
only because they had given you
their solemn word.

7 Your father Devavrata-Bhīṣma,
learned in every detail of dharma,
summoned the lords of the earth
and said to them:

8 "Kṣatriyas!
This is an open mahā-door to heaven!
Enter it,
And enjoy the realms of Śakra-Indra and Brahmā!

9 The ancients
Have showed you this eternal path!
Achieve honour
By fighting with single-minded dedication.

10 Nābhāga, Yayāti, Māndhātā, Nahuṣa and Nṛga
Obtained the highest success by such dedication.

11 It is adharma
For a Kṣatriya to die of disease at home;
It is his eternal dharma
To die on the battlefield."

12 The handsome earth-lords listened to Bhīṣma,
O bull-brave Bharata –
and then they drove their chariots
to battle stations.

13 Vikartana's son Karṇa, his relatives and friends,
O bull-brave Bharata,
put aside their weapons
because Bhīṣma desired it.

14 Your sons and all the rājās,
with the exception of Karṇa,
marched forward, their cries deafening
the ten points of the horizon.

15 It was a magnificent spectacle –
countless white umbrellas,
pennants, flagstaffs, elephants, horses, chariots,
foot-soldiers.

16 The earth shook under the rattle
of chariot-wheels,
and the noise of *dundubhi*-kettledrums
and tabors and cymbals.

17 The mahā-chariot-heroes,
ornamented with gold bracelets and armlets,
were as dazzling
as hills set on fire.

18 And Bhīṣma had the enchanting radiance
of the rising sun,
as he stood there
with his five-starred palmtree flag.

19 Then, O bull-brave Bharata, following Bhīṣma's orders,
all the bow-expert rājās on your side
moved forward
into their strategic positions.

20 Śaibya, ruler of the Govasenas,
rode on a rājā-worthy elephant,
under a proudly fluttering flag.
Always prepared for an emergency,

21 Aśvatthāman marched under a flag
with a lion's-tail symbol.
Srutāyudha, Citrasena, Purumitra,
and Viviṁśati,

22 With Śalya, Bhūriśravas, and the mahā-chariot-hero
Vikarṇa – these seven mahā-bowmen –
in splendid armour and glittering chariots –
followed Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,

23 But protected the front line of Bhīṣma;
their excellent chariots
were adorned with high-flying flags
richly decorated

24 With Jāmbū-gold embroidery
which dazzled all who saw it.
An intricate symbol of a golden altar,
with a *kamaṇḍalu* pot

25 Intertwined with a bow,
was ācārya Droṇa's flag.
Inspiring hundreds and thousands
of soldiers

26 Was Duryodhana's mahā-flag
with its gem-clustered symbol of a Nāga.
Paurava, Śrutāyudha of Kaliṅga,
Kāmboja's Sudakṣiṇa,

27 Kṣemadhanva and Sumitra – these chariot-heroes
protected Duryodhana's front line.
The ruler of the Magadhas,
in a luxurious chariot
flying the sign of the bull,
commanded a huge army.

28 Noble-minded Kṛpa and the ruler of Aṅga
were protecting
the massive eastern contingent,
thick as autumn clouds.

29 Mahā-illustrious rājā Jayadratha's shining banner
carried the boar symbol.
He led his soldiers
in a dazzle of military glory,

30 Commanding a hundred thousand chariots,
eight thousand elephants
and sixty thousand
excellent cavalry warriors –

31 An endless resplendent mahā-force
of chariots
and elephants and horses
obedient to the Sindhu rājā.

32 The king of Kaliṅga, Śrutāyudha,
with his ally Ketumān,
led sixty thousand chariots
and ten thousand elephants.

33 Armed with war machines, with *tomara*-lances,
spears and banners,
the hill-huge elephants added radiance
to the battlefield.

34 And blinding was the dazzle
of the king of the Kalingas
with his white umbrella, waving fans,
and fiery banner.

35 O rājā! Armed with a shining hook,
atop a huge elephant,
Ketumān shone on the field
like the sun among clouds.

36 Rājā Bhagadatta, self-gloriously grand,
led his soldiers
with the confidence of Vajra-Indra,
wielder of the thunderbolt.

37 Vinda and Anuvinda,
the two princes of Avanti,
reputed as Bhagadatta's equals,
followed Ketumān on two elephants.

38 A multi-faced army!
With chariots on all sides!
A smiling-faced army!
With elephants as its body,
kings its head, horses its wings,
ready to leap! –

39 O rājā! Led by Droṇa, that army,
led by Śāntanu's son rājā Bhīṣma,
by Droṇa's son Aśvatthaman,
and Kṛpa and Bāhlīka.

SECTION EIGHTEEN

1 Mahārāja (continued Sañjaya),
a cacophony shook the battlefield.
All combatants shouting! The tumultuous din
was heart-shuddersome!

2 Conches blowing, drums banging,
elephants trumpeting,
chariots rattling – the noise seemed
to almost sunder the earth!

3 The neighing of the horses
and the screams of the soldiers
filled all the corners of the sky
and the earth!

4 O unshakable hero! Your sons' armies
and the soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas
confronted each other –
and trembled.

5 Jāmbū-gold-engraved chariots
and hordes of elephants
on the battlefield
glittered like lightning-streaked clouds.

6 O lord of men! The war-banners of the soldiers
of your army,
designed with golden rings, blazed on the field
like so many fires.

7 Your army's banners and the banners
of the Pāṇḍavas, O Bharata,
glowed like the banners of Mahendra-Indra.
in the halls of heaven.

8 Golden armour gleamed like fire
on brave warriors
who stood on the field
shining like so many suns.

9 Brandishing splendid bows and arrows,
the Kauravas stood, O rājā,
wearing leather finger-guards
and waving beautiful banners.

10 Their eyes as large as those of bulls, O lord of men,
the mahā-bowmen
stood as leaders of their ranks.
Guarding Bhīṣma
from the rear were Duḥśāsana, Durviṣaha,
Durmukha, Duḥsaha,

11 Viviṁśati, Citrasena, the mahā-chariot-hero Vikarṇa,
Satyavrata, Purumitra, Jaya, Bhūriśravas, and Śala.

12 Reinforcing them
were twenty thousand chariot-warriors.
The Abhiśahas, the Śūrasenas,
the Śibis, the Vasātis,

13 The Śālvas, Matsyas, Ambaṣṭhas,
Trigartas, Kekayas,
Sauvīras, Kaitabhas, and eastern, western,
and northern tribes –

14 These twelve brave peoples had decided
to fight and die, if necessary.
Their chariots protected
Pitāmaha-Bhīṣma.

15 The king of Magadha
and his ten thousand elephants
provided further support
by following closely behind.

16 Protecting the chariots and elephants
was a splendid force
of crack foot-soldiers
numbering six hundred thousand.

17 The advance body of foot-soldiers,
experts in dart-throwing,
carrying bows and swords,
consisted of many hundred thousands.

18 O Bharata mahārāja, the eleven *akṣauhiṇis*
of your son Duryodhana
looked like the river Yamunā merged
with the Gaṅgā's waters.

SECTION NINETEEN

1 "Seeing our eleven *akṣauhiṇīs* battle-ready,'
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"how did Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira organise
his far fewer counter-forces?

2 Tell me, Sañjaya, how Kuntī's son
prepared to fight Bhīṣma
who knew human, divine, anti-divine
and gāndharva tactics."

3 Sañjaya replied: Seeing your soldiers
arrayed for battle,
dharmātmā dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
said to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:

4 "Maharṣi Bṛhaspati has explained
that small armies should fight
in tight formations,
large armies can be widely spaced.

5 When the few clash with the many,
he recommends
the Needle-mouth strategy.
It is a fact we are outnumbered.

6 Keep the mahā-ṛṣi's advice in mind,
Pāṇḍu's son,
and prepare for battle."
Arjuna replied to the dharmarāja Pāṇḍava:

7 "Finest of rājās, I will ready the impregnable array
known as the Thunderbolt,
devised by thunder-wielding
Vajrapāṇi-Indra himself.

8 Invincible Bhīma,
whose valour is that of a thunderstorm,
who is the greatest of fierce warriors,
will head our army.

9 That supreme hero,
expert in all weapons of war,
will lead us
and annihilate our enemies.

10 Just as puny creatures, terror-stricken,
flee from a lion,
the soldiers of Duryodhana will flee
from mighty Bhīma.

11 We have nothing to fear.
Bhīma is a barricade that shelters us,
just as Devarāja Indra
shelters the gods.

12 Who is there in the world who dares to look
Vṛkodara wolf-waisted Bhīma in the eye
when that bull-among-men hero
is angered?

13 When Bhīma brandishes his mace,
made of iron,
he is capable of drying up
even the entire ocean.

14 Even the princes of Kekaya,
Dhṛṣṭaketu and Cekitāna,
cannot equal him.
His ministers are waiting for your move –

15 As is Duryodhana." Then, O rājā, dreadful-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna told Bhīma,
"Here's your chance to display the ferocity
of your mahā-strength."

16 The Pāṇḍava soldiers listened intently
to Arjuna's advice,
O Bharata,
and offered him their loyal pūjā-respect.

17 Mahā-muscled Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
then went about his task
of organising his army
and marching against his foes.

18 Seeing the Kaurava ranks advancing,
the Pāṇḍavas
remained still and calm
like the Gaṅgā's waters;
then, slowly, they surged
into pre-planned military deployment.

19 Commanding the armies of the Pāṇḍavas
were Bhīma,
brilliantly brave Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Nakula,
Sahadeva and Dhṛṣṭaketu.

20 Rājā Virāṭa, his brothers and sons,
with an *akṣauhiṇī* of soldiers,
protected the rear
of the Pāṇḍava army.

21 The mahā-radiant twins Nakula and Sahadeva
covered Bhīma's chariot.
His rear was protected by Draupadī's sons
and Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu.

22 The prince of Pāñcāla,
the mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna
covered them from behind
with his Prabhadraka chariot-heroes.

23 O bull-brave Bharata! Covering them was Śikhaṇḍin
who was covered by Arjuna –
and Śikhaṇḍin was determined
to destroy Bhīṣma.

24 Behind Arjuna was mahā-powerful
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki;
covering Arjuna's wheels were the Pāñcāla princes
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas.

25 In the very centre of the army was Kuntī's son,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
with an array of rutting, aggressive,
hill-huge elephants.

26 Yajñasena-Drupada,
the mahā-minded king of the Pāñcālas,
stationed his *akṣauhiṇī*-strong army behind Virāṭa,
to reinforce the Pāṇḍavas.

27 The war-flags that fluttered
on the leaders' chariots
were gold-embroidered,
shining like the sun and the moon.

28 The mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
with his brothers and sons,
covered Yudhiṣṭhira from behind,
and urged the kings ahead.

29 Overshadowing the magnificent flags
of your army and your enemies',
was the single mahā-ape
on Arjuna's flag.

30 Hundreds of thousands of foot-soldiers,
brandishing swords,
lances, and daggers, forged ahead
to protect Bhīma.

31 Ten thousand elephants, rutting juice
streaming down their temples,
each brave, each caparisoned in gold filigree,
each hill-huge,

32 Each drenched with rutting juice,
each fragrant as a lotus,
followed the rājā
like marching mountains.

33 And Bhīma whirled his excellent mace
like an iron-tipped *parigha*-club,
and spread terror
in your son's ranks.

34 He was blinding like the sun;
he scorched all
his enemy's soldiers;
no one dared approach him.

35 This Thunder-Needle battle formation,
devised by Gāṇḍīva-wielding Arjuna,
faced all sides, and shot lightning-like arrows
from its everywhere-facing bows.

36 Having planned their counter-strategy,
the Pāṇḍavas waited.
Who in the world could hope to pierce
the Pāṇḍava formation?

37 While the armies waited for sunrise,
a wind blew, scattering rain drops.
Thunder roared
in a cloudless sky.

38 Dry winds howled,
showering small, sharp, pointed stones.
A dust-storm enveloped the world
in thick mahā-darkness.

39 Meteors crashed in the east, O bull-brave Bharata.
Speeding towards the rising sun,
they disintegrated with deafening noise
into tiny fragments.

40 O bull-brave Bharata!
The armies stood, poised for battle;
the wan sun rose, the earth shook
and seemed to split,

41 The earth seemed to be breaking apart!
O bull-brave Bharata rājā,
again and again one could hear
the crackle of thunder.

42 Nothing was visible in the ubiquitous,
blinding dust.
The tall war-banners,
waving in the gusting wind,

43 Adorned with golden filigree-work,
garlanded with flowers and gusting cloths,
sun-splendid,
kiṅkiṇi-bell-ornamented,

44 Suddenly started tinkling *jhaṇa-jhaṇa*
like a forest of swaying palm-trees.
So the war-bent
Pāṇḍava tigers-among-men

45 Stood in counter-array against your son;
they faced, O bull-brave-Bharata,
your soldiers as if eager to suck
their very blood.

46 The Pāṇḍavas gazed steadily at Bhīma
Who headed, mace in hand, their army.

SECTION TWENTY

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked, "Tell me, Sañjaya,
at sunrise
which army confidently marched first
against the other?
Both Bhīma and Bhīṣma were, I know,
eager to fight.

2 Which army had the advantage
of sun, moon, and wind?
Which army suffered from inauspicious howling
of predatory beasts?
Who were the young, happy-faced warriors?
Tell me in detail."

3 Sañjaya replied: O Indra-among-men!
Both armies pleased the eyes,
both exuded equal confidence
with elephants, horses, and chariots,
like two forests in full bloom
on the march.

4 O descendant of Bharata!
The excellent soldiers
of these terrifying armies,
showing mutual intolerance,
appeared as if
they would conquer heaven.

5 Dhṛtarāṣtra's armies
stood facing the west,
the Pāṇḍavas the east;
the Kauravas the Daitya
anti-gods, the Pāṇḍavas
Devendra-Indra's army.

6 Fierce winds blew
from behind the Pāṇḍavas –
and animals screamed,
and the Kaurava elephants
chafed at the odour
of the Pāṇḍava elephants.

7 Astride a lotus-
hued elephant, on a golden
seat, was Duryodhana,
in steel-network armour,
in the army's centre,
praised by the poets.

8 A moon-white umbrella
with a golden chain
protected his head;
behind him came Śakuni,
rājā of Gāndhāra,
and the Gāndhāra hill-soldiers.

9 White umbrella.
White head-dress.
White bow and sword.
White war-banner.
White chariot-horses.
Like a white mountain
Came elderly Bhīṣma,
Commander of the Kauravas.

10 Under Bhīṣma's command
were the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
Śala, the Bāhlīkas,
and heroic warriors
from Ambaṣṭha, Sauvīra,
and the land of five rivers.

11 Bow in hand, Droṇa,
mahātmā guru
of nearly all the rājās,
in a golden chariot
with red horses, like Indra
protected the soldiers.

12 Jayadratha, Bhūriśravas,
Purumitra and Jaya,
the Matsyas, the Kekayas
with innumerable elephants,
and the Śālvas were based
in the army's centre.

13 The front-line fighter,
mahātmā Kṛpa,
expert in warfare,
selected the north
with Śakas, Kirātas,
Yavanas and Pahlavas.

14 Protected by chariots
of the Vṛṣṇis and Bhojas
and the skilful and well-armed
Saurāṣtra warriors,
Kṛtavarman's forces
were placed in the south.

15 The ten thousand warriors
who vowed to kill Arjuna
or die if they failed,
the Saṁśaptakas,
with Trigarta allies,
kept tailing Arjuna.

16 O descendant of Bharata, your army
had a hundred thousand elephants;
each elephant was covered
by one hundred chariot-heroes;
each chariot hero
had one hundred horses;

17 Each horse-warrior had ten archers,
each archer
had ten shield-armed soldiers.
Such, O Bharata, was Bhīṣma's strategy.

18 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma re-arranged plans
each morning,
choosing divine, anti-divine,
gāndharva and human formations.

19 Bhīṣma's army faced the west,
ready for battle.
Duryodhana's mahā-chariot-heroes roared
like ocean waves.

20 O Indra-among-men!
Your army was fierce,
but fiercer indeed,
and invincible were the Pāṇḍava
ranks, led by Arjuna
and Keśava-Krishna.

SECTION TWENTY-ONE

1 Seeing the huge army of Duryodhana
(continued Sañjaya),
Kuntī's son, rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
suddenly lost heart.

2 Seeing the impregnable battle formation
of Bhīṣma,
and concluding it was really so,
he said sadly to Arjuna:

3 "O mahā-muscled Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Can we really fight
and defeat this army
so long as Pitāmaha Bhīṣma commands it?

4 Their battle-formation is immovable
and impregnable;
foe-crushing Bhīṣma has deployed it
in the light of the śāstras.

5 It is not likely that we will succeed,
O enemy-slayer.
What chance have we of victory
against Bhīṣma?"

6 Foe-annihilating Arjuna said confidently
to Yudhiṣṭhira, Kuntī's son,
who was lost in grief,
reassuring him:

7 "A handful of men, if they employ
the right guṇa-strategy,
can rout hordes of enemies. O lord of the world!
Let me explain.

8 You do not have this knowledge,
which is why, O Pāṇḍava rājā,
I tell you. Only ṛṣi Nārada, Bhīṣma
and Droṇa know about this.

9 In the very distant past, during the clash
between the gods and anti-gods,
Pitāmaha Brahmā advised
Mahendra-Indra and the gods:

10 'Those who seek real victory,
seek it not by might,
but by truth, compassion, dharma
and conciliation.

11 Fight without arrogance.
Give up greed and confusion,
give up adharma,
– and fight!
Victory is where dharma is.'

12 That is why I can convinced
victory is ours, O rājā.
It was Nārada who said,
'Victory is where Krishna is.'

13 Victory is Krishna's very first guṇa;
it accompanies Mādhava-Krishna
wherever he goes;
his second guṇa is humility.

14 Govinda-Krishna has incalculable power.
Countless foes cannot harm him.
He is the Eternal Puruṣa.
Where Krishna is, victory is.

15 This is the indestructible, invincible Hari-Krishna
who in the past
asked the gods and anti-gods,
'Who among you seeks victory?'

16 And the gods replied,
'With you leading, we will win.'
Through Krishna's grace the Śakra-Indra-led gods
conquered the three worlds.

17 Why do I see you depressed?
You have no reason to be so dejected.
The lord of the worlds and of the gods Krishna
is on your side, O Bharata."

SECTION TWENTY-TWO

1 Stationing his soldiers in counter-formation
(Sañjaya continued),
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira inspired them with these words,
O bull-brave Bharata:

2 "The Pāṇḍavas have adopted the strategy
advised in the śāstras.
Enhancers of Kaurava glory,
fight fairly to obtain heaven."

3 In the centre of the army was Śikhaṇḍin and his soldiers,
covered by Savyasācī-Arjuna.
In front was Dhṛṣṭadyumna
covered by Bhīma.

4 Handsome Yuyudhāna, equal of Arjuna,
finest-of-the-Sātvatas, Satyaki
covered the southern flank
of the Pāṇḍava host.

5 In a chariot worthy
of carrying Indra –
with a gold-worked banner
and golden reins –
was Yudhiṣṭhira himself
leading his elephants,

6 Supremely handsome
with an ivory-handled
milk-white umbrella
over his head,
and maharṣis chanting
his fulsome praises.

7 *Purohitas,* deva-ṛṣis
and perfected mortals
showered their blessings
with japas and mantras
invoking destruction
and death on his enemies.

8 Distributing gifts
of cattle and clothes
and flowers and fruits
and gold coins to Brahmins,
mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira advanced
like Śakra-Indra.

9 The chariot of Arjuna,
with hundreds of *kiṅkiṇi-*
bells and Jāmbū-gold-work
and glittering wheels,
was ablaze with the glory
of one thousand suns.

10 In this chariot, brandishing
the Gāṇḍīva bow,
with his ape-banner flying,
and holding his quiver,
was unequalled Arjuna,
with Keśava-Krishna.

11 And he who, weaponless,
with bare hands crushed
elephants and horses
and foes into pulp,
now became the horrendous
scourge of your sons –

12 He was wolf-waisted Bhīma,
who covered the chariots
with the help of the twins
Nakula and Sahadeva.
He walked like an elephant,
like a lion, like Mahendra-Indra,

13 And your soldiers, seeing him,
felt the shudder of fear
and were lost in dejection,
and trembled like elephants
inextricably trapped
in a desolate swamp.

14 It was then, O excellent Bharata,
that Janārdana-Krishna,
looking at soldier-surrounded Guḍākeśa-Arjuna,
said to him:

15 "Whose anger is fiery,
who attacks like a lion
from his army's centre,
who has singly performed
three hundred horse-*yajñas* –
there he is – Bhīṣma.

16 Innumerable soldiers
surround him and guard him,
like clouds the sun.
O hero of heroes!
Destroy them, and challenge
bull-brave Bhīṣma."

SECTION TWENTY-THREE

1 Observing the army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons
marching into battle
(continued Sañjaya), Krishna gave Arjuna
this beneficial advice:

2 "O mahā-muscled hero,
the battle is about to begin.
To defeat your foes, purify yourself –
pray to Durgā."

3 Advised by wise Vāsudeva-Krishna
on the eve of battle,
Pārtha-Arjuna alighted from his chariot,
did *añjali* and chanted this *stotra*:

[VI:23:4-8]

Transcreated by P. Lal

4 "*Namaste!*
Lady of the Mandara forest!
Leader of perfected mortals!
Lady of blessings!
Virginal one! Kumārī!
Kālī!
Consort of Kāpāla!
Kapilā!
Black-skinned goddess!
Kṛṣṇā-piṅgale!

5 Bhadrakālī!
Bestower of benefits!
I bow to you! *Namastu*!
Mahākālī! *Namastu*!
Goddess of righteous wrath!
Caṇḍi!
I bow to you! *Namastu*!
Radiant redeemer!
Lady auspiciously endowed!

6 Kātyāyanī!
O mahā-fortune-favoured one!
Fearful one!
Granter of victory!
Victorious one!
Goddess with the peacock plumes!
Variedly ornamented lady!

7 Goddess of the fearful spear!
Wielder of sword and shield!
Younger sister of the cowherd chief!
Goddess of the race of nandagopa!

8 Delighter in buffalo blood!
Deity born in the race of Kuśika!
Wearer of the yellow dress!
Devourer of enemies! O wolf-faced one!
Ever-eager for battle!
Namaste!

9 Umā!
Śākambharī! Śāka-island-dweller!
Sea-of-milk white goddess!
Black goddess! Kṛṣṇā!
Destroyer of the anti-god Kaiṭabha!
Golden-eyed one!
Ugly-eyed one!
You who have eyes the colour of smoke!
I bow to you! *Namo-astu*!

10 You are the Vedas!
You are Śruti!
You are the highest virtue Mahā-puṇya!
You bless Brahmins!
You know the Jātaveda fire!
You dwell in the *jambu*, *kaṭaka* and *caitya* trees!

11 Of knowledges, you are knowledge of Brahman!
In bodies, you the deep cosmic sleep Mahā-nidrā!
O Durgā!
Auspicious mother of Skanda!
You who dwell in inaccessible regions!

12 You who are Svāhā
Svadhā
Kalā
Kāṣṭhā
Sarasvatī
Sāvitrī
Veda Mother
Vedānta!

13 Mahā-devī!
With my purest innermost ātman
I sing your praises!
Grant me your grace
To be victorious in battle!
Always, goddess!

14

You who live
where there is fear
where it is hard to reach
You who live
in the nether region Pātāla
You who live
in the hearts of your *bhaktas*
You who rout
the ranks of the Dānavas!

15

You are Unconsciousness
Sleep
Māyā
Modesty
Śrī
Saṁdhyā
Day
Sāvitrī
Mother

16

You are Fulfilment
Prosperity
Radiance
You are the strength
of the Sun and the Moon
You are the radiance
of the Sun and the Moon
Perfected mortals and Cāraṇas
see you in meditation."

17

Impressed by the bhakti of Arjuna
(continued Sañjaya),
boon-conferring Durgā, in Govinda-Krishna's presence,
said to Arjuna:

18

"Pāṇḍava!
You will soon defeat your enemies.
You are Nara,
And you have Nārāyaṇa to help you.

19

No enemy can ever harm you,
Not even thunder-wielding Vajra-bhṛta-Indra himself."
With these words,
The gracious goddess disappeared.

20 Kuntī's son Arjuna received the boon.
Regaining confidence,
he once again climbed
into his excellent chariot.

21 Krishna and Arjuna, from the chariot,
blew their celestial conches.
The man who chants this praise
in the morning

22 Need never fear rākṣasas, yakṣas,
and *piśācas,*
nor snakes, nor any poison-toothed
or fanged creatures.

23 He has no need to fear
even royal enemies.
He is sure to win.
If captured, he will escape.

24 He will overcome all difficulties.
No thieves can harm him.
He will win.
Lakṣmī is on his side.

25 He will live healthy and happy
for a hundred years.
All this was given me by the grace
of wise Vyāsa himself.

26 Your ill-ātmaned sons do not, however,
know the two to be
Nara and Nārāyaṇa;
they are trapped in great delusion.

27 They are caught in the noose of Kāla,
they do not know their end is near.
Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa, Nārada,
defectless Paraśurāma and Kaṇva –
all tried in vain
to dissuade your son.

28 Where dharma is,
 are glory and beauty.
Where humility is,
 are intelligence and prosperity.
Where dharma is,
 Krishna is.
Where Krishna is,
 victory is.

SECTION TWENTY-FOUR

1 "Sañjaya, which side was first to advance?"
 asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
"Who were dispirited and sad,
 who brimming with confidence?

2 Who struck first
 in that heart-shuddering war –
my soldiers or the Pāṇḍavas?
 Give me the details.

3 Whose soldiers had garlands and unguents
 shedding perfume everywhere?
Whose soldiers shouted,
 yet spoke humanely?"

4 Both sides (replied Sanjaya)
 were confident at first.
The garlands and unguents of both
 shed perfume everywhere.

5 O bull-brave Bharata!
 When the armies clashed,
the carnage that resulted was gruesome
 beyond words.

6 The noise of the musical instruments,
 of conches and drums,
O rājā, and the war-cries
 of the chafing soldiers –
one din overlapping another –
 was ear-splitting.

7 The elephants trumpeted, O bull-brave Bharata.
 It was a bloodthirsty clash
between exulting adversaries
 confronting each other.

ॐ

The Bhagavad-Gītā

[V:25:1-7]

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता

अथ प्रथमोऽध्यायः

अर्जुनविषाद

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

सञ्जय उवाच

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २ ॥

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ ३ ॥

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ ४ ॥

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ ५ ॥

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६ ॥

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते ॥ ७ ॥

Canto 1

Arjuna-Viṣāda Yoga

The Yoga of Arjuna's Depression

1 *Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:*
On Dharmakṣetra the field-of-dharma,
On Kurukṣetra the field of the Kauravas,
My children and Pāṇḍu's children,
Gathered together and eager for battle –
What did they do? Tell me, Sañjaya.

2 *Sañjaya said:*
Seeing the Pāṇḍava army in battle array,
Rājā Duryodhana approached his ācārya Droṇa
And said to him:

3 O Ācārya!
Look at this mahā-army of the sons of Pāṇḍu
Arrayed for battle by your brilliant pupil
Drupada's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

4 There they are, the heroes –
Mahā-bowmen all of them –
The mahā-chariot-heroes
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki, Virāṭa and Drupada –
All equal in war-skill to Bhīma and Arjuna.

5 As well as Dhṛṣṭaketu and Cekitāna,
The valiant Rājā of Kāśī,
Purujit and Kuntibhoja, and bull-brave Śaibya;

6 And other mahā-chariot-heroes also;
Heroic Yudhāmanyu, brave Uttamaujas,
Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu, and the sons of Draupadī.

7 O finest of the twice-born!
See also the finest among us,
The leaders of my army.
I will name each of them to you:

[V:25:8-16]

Transcreated by P. Lal

भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिंजयः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥ ८ ॥

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११ ॥

तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२ ॥

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ १३ ॥

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४ ॥

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १५ ॥

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोशमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १६ ॥

8 You yourself and Bhīṣma and Karṇa,
And war-winning Kṛpa, Aśvatthāman, and Vikarṇa,
And Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas.

9 And many other heroes too,
All ready to lay down their lives for my sake,
All absolute experts in warfare,
Armed with weapons of all kinds.

10 Our army under the charge of Bhīṣma
Is vast in size and strength,
Their army under the charge of Bhīma
Is limited in size and strength.

11 Order your warriors
To form ranks in their proper places,
And see that they protect Bhīṣma in every way.

12 To revive the spirit of Duryodhana,
The illustrious Kaurava elder Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
Blew loudly on his conch like a lion roaring.

13 Suddenly, conches and *bheriya*-kettledrums,
Paṇava-tabors, *anaka*-trumpets, and *gomukha*-horns
Blared out simultaneously.
A tumultuous noise!

14 Standing in their mahā-chariot pulled by white horses,
Mādhava-Krishna and Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
Blew their divine conches.

15 Lord-of-the-senses Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna
Blew his conch called the Pāñcajanya;
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna blew his conch
Called the Devadatta;
Wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
Blew his mahā-conch called the Pauṇḍra.

16 Kuntī's son Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira blew his conch
Called the Ananta-vijaya,
Nakula blew the Sughośa,
And Sahadeva blew the Maṇi-puṣpaka;

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १७ ॥

द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥ १८ ॥

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥ १९ ॥

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ २० ॥

अर्जुन उवाच

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ २१ ॥

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन्रणसमुद्यमे ॥ २२ ॥

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ २३ ॥

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान् समवेतान्कुरूनिति ॥ २५ ॥

17 The brilliant bowman king of Kāśī,
The mahā-chariot-hero Śikhaṇḍin,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa and invincible Sātyaki;

18 Drupada, the sons of Draupadī,
And Subhadrā's mahā-muscled son Abhimanyu –
Each blew his own conch,
O lord-of-the-earth Dhṛtarāṣṭra!

19 The peals of chaotic noise, crashing through sky and
earth,
Spread panic in the hearts of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's soldiers.

20 Seeing your army marshalled and ready
To shoot arrows and other missiles,
Ape-emblemed Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
Picked up his bow,

21 And, O lord-of-the-earth Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
He said to Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna:
"O Acyuta-Krishna!
Drive my chariot between the two armies.

22 Before the battle begins
I want to see all who are eager to fight.
I must know my enemy.

23 I must see those who have gathered here
Eager to fight and who wish to please
Wicked-minded Duryodhana on the battlefield."

24 *Sañjaya said:*
O descendant of Bharata!
As ordered by Guḍākeśa-Arjuna,
Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna drove the magnificent chariot
Between the two armies.

25 Facing Bhīṣma and Droṇa and the rulers of the earth,
He said: "Look, Pārtha-Arjuna!
Look at all the Kauravas assembled here."

[VI:25:26-34]

Transcreated by P. Lal

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।
आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातृन्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥ २६ ॥

श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरूभयोरपि ।
तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥ २७ ॥

कृपया परयाष्टिो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ २८ ॥

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ २९ ॥

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥ ३० ॥

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।
न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥ ३१ ॥

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥ ३२ ॥

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥ ३३ ॥

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ॥ ३४ ॥

26 Pārtha-Arjuna saw, in the camps of both,
Fathers and grandfathers,
Ācāryas and maternal uncles,
Brothers, cousin brothers, sons and grandsons,
And loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friends.

27 In both the armies, Kuntī's son Arjuna saw
His fathers-in-law and wellwishers and all his relatives.

28 Filled with profound pity, deeply distressed,
Arjuna said: "O Krishna!
I see in front of me my very own people
Gathered for battle.

29 My limbs fail me,
My mouth is dry,
My body trembles,
I am horripilating.

30 The Gāṇḍīva bow slips from my hand,
My skin is burning,
I cannot stand straight,
My head is spinning.

31 O Keśava-Krishna!
I see ill omens.
I see no good in killing my own kinsmen.

32 Krishna! I don't want victory.
I want neither kingdom nor happiness.
What use is kingdom, luxuries, or even life to me,
O Govinda-Krishna?

33 The very people for whom we desire
Kingdom, luxuries, happiness –
They are the ones standing here ready for battle –
They are the ones who have given up
Their wealth and even their life –

34 Ācāryas, fathers, sons and grandfathers,
Maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons,
brothers-in-law,
And other relatives as well.

[VI:25:35-42]

Transcreated by P. Lal

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते।३५।

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ।३६।

तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् स्वबान्धवान्।
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव।३७।

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम्।३८।

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम्।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन।३९।

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत।४०।

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः।४१।

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः।४२।

35 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
I will not kill them. Let them kill me instead.
I will not kill them even for the three worlds –
Certainly not for this earth.

36 O Janārdana-Krishna!
What pleasure can there be in killing Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons?
It is a crime to kill even the worst of enemies.

37 We must not kill our relatives, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
O Mādhava-Krishna!
How can happiness ever be ours
If we kill our own kinsmen?

38 Their minds are confused by greed.
They see no wrong in the destruction of a family.
They see no crime in hostility towards friends;

39 But we who see clearly the evil
That comes from destroying a family –
O Janārdana-Krishna!
Why should we not refrain
From such a vicious deed?

40 When the family is destroyed,
Sanātana-family-dharma is destroyed.
When such a dharma is destroyed,
Adharma overpowers the entire family.

41 O Krishna! When adharma prevails,
The women of the family get corrupted.
O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna!
When the women are corrupted,
Varṇa-caste intermixture takes place.
Such miscegenation leads to hell for the family

42 And the destroyers of the family.
Deprived of ritual *piṇḍa*-offerings,
Their *pitṛ*-ancestors fall.

[VI:25:43-47]

Transcreated by P. Lal

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः।४३।

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन।
नरकेऽनियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम।४४।

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम्।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः।४५।

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत्।४६।

संजय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत्।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः।४७।

ॐतत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादेऽर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥

43 These vicious deeds of family-destroyers
Which lead to caste-intermixture
Lead also to the destruction
Of long-lasting family-dharma and caste-dharma.

44 O Janardana-Krishna!
We have heard that hell is inevitable
For all who discard family-dharma.

45 Aho!
What mahā-evil are we committing!
We are ready to kill our own relatives
Because we covet the pleasures of a kingdom.

46 Much better if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
Armed with weapons, kill me, unarmed and unresisting
On the battlefield."

47 *Sañjaya said:*
Saying this on the battlefield,
Arjuna flung aside his bow and arrows,
And slumped down in his chariot,
Stricken with paralysing grief.

This is the first canto titled The Arjuna-Viṣāda Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:26:1-7]

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

सांख्य योग

संजय उवाच

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम्।
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः। १ ।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम्।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन । २ ।

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप। ३ ।

अर्जुन उवाच

कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन।
इषुभिः प्रति योत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन। ४ ।

गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके।
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव
भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान्। ५ ।

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः। ६ ।

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्। ७ ।

Transcreated by P. Lal

Canto 2
Sāṁkhya-Yoga
The Yoga of Knowledge

1 *Sañjaya said:*
Madhusūdana-Krishna spoke to grief-stricken Arjuna
Who was overpowered by pity
And whose eyes were brimming with tears.

2 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Your sorrow in this crisis, Arjuna,
Is disgraceful, un-āryan.
It stands in the way of heaven.
It is dishonourable, it does not become you.

3 Don't be a eunuch, Pārtha-Arjuna,
It does not suit you at all, O crusher-of-foes!
Give up this shameful weakness –
And stand up!"

4 *Arjuna said:*
"O Madhusūdana-Krishna! O destroyer-of-foes!
How can I shoot arrows at Bhīṣma and Droṇa
On the field of battle?
They are the very ones who are worthy of my pūjā.

5 Why, it is surely better to live as a beggar
Than kill these very venerable gurus.
To kill gurus is to enjoy
Blood-stained wealth and pleasures.

6 Who can tell which is better –
We defeating them or they conquering us?
Facing us are Dhṛtarāṣṭra's own sons.
If we kill them, life will not be worth living.

7 Misplaced pity is paralysing me.
My mind is confused in this dilemma of dharma.
And so I beg of you – Tell me what is best for me.
I am your disciple. I seek refuge in you. Advise me.

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद्
यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं
राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् । ८ ।

संजय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परंतप ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह । ९ ।

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ।१०।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ।११।

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ।१२।

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ।१३।

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ।१४।

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ।१५।

8 I can see nothing to remove this depression
Which is destroying my senses –
Not even kingship over the rich earth
Or lordship over the gods."

9 *Sañjaya said:*
Foe-crushing Guḍākeśa-Arjuna
Said this to Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna.
Then he added to Govinda-Krishna,
"I will not fight," and lapsed into silence.

10 O Bharata-descendant Dhṛtarāṣṭra!
Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna seemed to be smiling as he spoke
To Arjuna who was grieving in the middle of the battlefield.

Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:
11 "You are mourning those who do not deserve mourning.
But there is wisdom in your words.
However, paṇḍits mourn neither the living nor the dead.

12 It is not that I never was, that you are not,
That all these kings are not.
And it is not that we
Shall cease to exist in the future.

13 To the embodied ātman,
Childhood, youth and old age happen naturally.
The acquiring of a new body is natural too.
This does not confuse the wise person.

14 Kaunteya-Arjuna! Heat and cold, pleasure and pain
Are produced from sensual contacts.
They come and go. They exist for the time being.
O Bharata-descendant! Learn to endure them patiently.

15 O bull-brave Arjuna!
The person who is not agitated by pleasure and pain,
Who remains serene in both –
Only he is worthy of immortality.

[VI:26:16-23]

Transcreated by P. Lal

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ।१६।

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ।१७।

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ।१८।

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ।१९।

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-
न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ।२०।

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ।२१।

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ।२२।

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ।२३।

16 The untrue never is,
The True never is not.
Those who know the Truth know this.

17 And that Self which pervades everything –
Know that Self to be imperishable.
Nothing can bring about
The destruction of this imperishable Self.

18 The eternal, indestructible and immeasurable Self
Dwells in physical bodies.
It is only these bodies which perish.
Therefore, fight, O Bharata-descendant Arjuna!

19 Whoever sees the Self as slayer
And whoever sees it as slain –
Neither knows the truth.
The Self does not slay nor is it slain.

20 This is not born. It does not die.
It does not evolve.
It is birthless, eternal, changeless, and primeval.
It does not die when the body dies.

21 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
If a person knows it as imperishable,
Eternal, birthless and undecaying –
How can he possibly kill or make another kill?

22 Like a person discarding worn-out clothes
And putting on new clothes,
The embodied Self discards the worn-out body,
And enters a new body.

23 Weapons cannot cut this Self,
Fire cannot burn it,
Water cannot wet this Self,
Wind cannot dry it.

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयंमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ।२४।

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ।२५।

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैवं शोचितुमर्हसि ।२६।

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ।२७।

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ।२८।

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन-
माश्चर्यवद्वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति
श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ।२९।

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ।३०।

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ।३१।

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ।३२।

24 The Self cannot be cut or burnt, or wetted or dried.
It is eternal, all-pervading, immobile and immovable,
It is sanātana: it is always what it is.

25 The Self is said to be
Unmanifested, inconceivable, unchanging.
When you know that this is so, why do you grieve?

26 O mahā-muscled Arjuna!
Even if you think that this Self
Is endlessly born and endlessly dies,
You should not grieve.

27 For death is sure of that which is born,
And birth is sure of that which dies.
Why should you grieve over the inevitable?

28 O Bharata-descendant Arjuna!
All creatures are unmanifested in the beginning,
They are manifested in the middle,
And they become unmanifested in the end.
Is this a cause for grief?

29 Some see this Self as marvellous,
Some speak of it as marvellous,
Some hear of it as marvellous,
Others hear of it, but cannot fathom it.

30 This embodied ātman
Which dwells in the bodies of all is indestructible.
Therefore, O descendant of Bharata,
You should not mourn for any creature.

31 Realise your sva-dharma, and stop trembling,
For there is nothing greater to a Kṣatriya
Than a war of dharma.

32 Fortunate are Kṣatriyas who fight in such a war.
O Pārtha-Arjuna, for such warriors
The door of heaven opens by itself.

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि।३३।

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि
कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम्।
सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्ति-
र्मरणादतिरिच्यते।३४।

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः।
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम्।३५।

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः।
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम्।३६।

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम्।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः।३७।

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि।३८।

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये
बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु।
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ
कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि।३९।

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्।४०।

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन।
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम्।४१।

33 But if you refuse to fight this war of dharma,
You will lose your sva-dharma,
You will lose your honour.
You will be committing a great crime.

34 You will be branded shameful by the entire world.
Shame is worse than death to a man of honour.

35 The mahā-chariot-heroes will say
You fled the battlefield in fear.
And those who once praised you
Will now think of you as useless.

36 Even your enemies will mock your prowess.
They will say unspeakable things about you.
What could be more painful than this?

37 If you die, heaven is yours.
If you win, the earth is yours.
So, Kaunteya-Arjuna, stand up!
Make up your mind to fight.

38 Treat equally joy and sorrow,
Gain and loss, victory and defeat.
Having done so, fight!
No blame will touch you.

39 I have explained Sāṁkhya philosophy to you.
Listen now to the wisdom of Yoga.
Once you know this, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
Your fetters of karma will break.

40 This effort is never wasted.
It never leads to contrary results.
Even a little of this dharma
Will save you from great fear.

41 O Kaurava-descendant Arjuna!
In this there is only single-minded determination.
The efforts of the confused and undecided are endless –
They branch off in countless directions.

[VI:26:42-49]

Transcreated by P.Lal

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ।४२।

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ।४३।

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ।४४।

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ।४५।

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः सम्प्लुतोदके ।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ।४६।

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ।४७।

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ।४८।

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनंजय ।
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ।४९।

42 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
The unwise delight in the flowery words of the Vedas;
They say nothing else exists.

43 They are full of selfish desires,
They seek heaven as their highest goal,
They believe in rituals to obtain pleasure and power –
These people are born again and again
As a result of the fruits of their karma.

44 All who are attached to pleasure and power
Lose their reason and discrimination
And fail to achieve the serenity of samādhi.

45 The Vedas deal with the three guṇas.
Free yourself, Arjuna, from these three guṇas.
Keep your poise in this world of opposites.
Free yourself from selfishness.
Be firm in the everlasting Ātman.

46 The Vedas are as useless
To a self-aware Brahman-knower
As a pond when water has flooded the land.

47 Your right is to work, never to the fruits of work.
Your motive for working
Should never be the fruits of work.
But do not give up work either.

48 O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Be steady in Yoga and carry on working.
Discard selfish attachment.
Be equal-minded in success and failure.
This serenity is Yoga.

49 O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna! Selfish work is far inferior
To work done with the mind firm in Yoga.
Seek shelter in a calm and balanced mind.
Wretched are they who work for the fruits of work.

[VI:26:50-57]

Transcreated by P. Lal

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ।५०।

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ।५२।

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ।५२।

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ।५३।

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम् ।५४।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ।५५।

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ।५६।

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।५७।

50 With your mind steady, you will become free
From the consequences of good deeds and ill deeds.
Therefore, devote yourself to this Yoga.
It is the secret of success in work.

51 The wise, whose minds are steady,
Give up the fruits of work.
They are freed from the shackles of birth and rebirth.
They achieve the state beyond all suffering.

52 When your mind has overcome
The deceptions of delusion,
Then repose will come to you
About things already heard and yet to be heard.

53 When your mind, so long confused by conflicting views
Expressed in the śruti scriptures,
Becomes firmly fixed in samādhi,
Then you will have achieved Yoga."

54 *Arjuna asked:*
"O Keśava-Krishna!
How does one recognise a man of serene wisdom?
A man deep in samādhi?
How does such a person speak, sit and walk?"

55 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"O Pārtha-Arjuna!
The man of serene wisdom is he
Who has completely shed kāma-desires,
Who is at peace in the ātman by the ātman."

56 Who is not upset by sorrow,
Who does not chase happiness.
Who is free from passion, fear and anger –
He is the muni of serene wisdom.

57 He is wise
Who is not attached to worldly things,
Who does not rejoice when good comes,
And is not depressed when sorrows comes.

[VI:26:58-65]

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।५८।

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ।५९।

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ।६०।

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।६१।

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ।५२।

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ।६३।

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ।६४।

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ।६५।

Transcreated by P. Lal

58 He is wise
Who can withdraw his senses
From the objects of the senses
Like the tortoise withdrawing its head into itself.

59 Objects of desire disappear
From the man who practises self-restraint,
But the taste for them lingers.
However, even the taste disappears
When you experience the Supreme Realisation.

60 O son of Kuntī! The senses are violent.
They overwhelm even a wise man
Who is practising self-restraint.

61 The steadfast man, however,
Focuses on me as the Supreme One.
He is wise, because he has controlled his senses.

62 Constant thinking of sense objects
Breeds attachment to them.
Attachment breeds kāma.
Kāma leads to anger.

63 Anger leads to delusion.
Delusion leads to loss of memory.
Loss of memory leads to loss of reason.
And when reason is lost, man is doomed.

64 But the person who is steady in his ātman,
Moving among sense-objects with his senses controlled,
Free from attachment and aversion –
Such a person receives divine blessings.
Such a person attains tranquillity.

65 When tranquillity is attained, all sorrows are destroyed.
When a person is tranquil, his mind soon becomes stable.

[VI:26:66-72]

Transcreated by P. Lal

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ।६६।

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनु विधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ।६७।

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।६८।

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ।६९।

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ।७०।

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ।७१।

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ।७२।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे सांख्ययोगो नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥२॥

66 The person whose mind is unsteady
Never grows in knowledge.
Without such growth there is no meditation.
Without meditation there is no peace.
Without peace there is no true happiness.

67 Like a storm scattering a boat,
The mind is scattered by the fickle senses,
And loses discrimination.

68 Therefore, it follows, O mahā-muscled one,
That when the senses are restrained from-sense-objects,
Then only is the mind steady.

69 What to others is night,
To the self-restrained man is wakefulness.
(When others are blind to spiritual experience,
He is awake to it.)
What others see as wakefulness, the muni sees as night.
(When others delight in material pleasures,
The muni closes his eyes.)

70 The tranquil ocean absorbs many rivers from all sides.
The muni absorbs kamā-desires calmly,
And achieves peace of mind.
The pursuer of kāma-desires never gains peace of mind.

71 The man who lives his life
By abandoning kāma-desires, giving up attachment,
Such an ego-free person gets peace of mind.

72 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
This is the meaning of being steady in Brahman.
Attaining this, one never gets deluded.
One remains always with Brahman.
This is the peace called Nirvāṇa."

This is the second canto titled Sāṁkhya-Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:27:1-8]

Transcreated by P.Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ तृतीयोऽध्यायः

कर्मयोगः

अर्जुन उवाच

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव । १ ।

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् । २ ।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।
ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् । ३ ।

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति । ४ ।

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः । ५ ।

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते । ६ ।

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते । ७ ।

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः । ८ ।

Canto 3

Karma Yoga

The Yoga of Action-Reaction

1 *Arjuna asked:*
"Janārdana-Krishna!
According to you, knowledge is superior to action.
If that is so, Keśava-Krishna,
Why are you urging me to do this horrible deed?

2 You are confusing me with contradictory advice.
Tell me that one truth by which I can find the Supreme."

3 *Śrī Bhagāvan Krishṇa replied:*
O defectless one! From the earliest times
I have provided two disciplines to this world:
For the meditative, the Yoga of Knowledge,
For the active, the Yoga of Action.

4 By refraining from action, you cannot reach the state of inaction.
By giving up action, you cannot attain perfection.

5 The truth is: you cannot be inactive,
You cannot stand still even for a second.
You are helpless –
The Prakṛtī-born guṇas compel you to action.

6 The person who restrains his physical senses
But lets his mind dwell on sense-objects –
Such a foolish person is known as a hypocrite.

7 On the other hand, Arjuna, that person excels
Who controls his senses by his mind,
And progresses in the Yoga of Action.

8 What needs to be performed is disciplined work.
To work is better than not to work.
Inaction will not hold even the body together.

[VI:27:9-16]

Transcreated by P. Lal

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
नदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर । ९ ।

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ।१०।

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ।११।

इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ।१२।

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ।१३।

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ।१४।

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ।१५।

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ।१६।

9 All deeds are traps in this world
Except disciplined selfless deeds.
O son of Kuntī! Work –
But work without attachment.

10 When Prajāpati the Lord of creation
Created the world along with yajña,
He said: 'With yajña-sacrifice you will prosper.
This will be your wish-fulfilling cow.

11 Please the gods with this,
And the gods will please you.
And you will mutually benefit.

12 Pleased by the yajña,
The gods will grant your desires.'
The person who takes without giving is a thief.

13 Good people who eat the sanctified remnants
Of yajña-offerings are freed of all defects.
But those who cook and eat only for themselves eat filth.

14 Food sustains all life.
Rain produces food.
Yajña as dedicated selfless activity produces rain,
And such yajña is born of karma.

15 Karma proceeds from Brahmā,
And Brahmā comes from the Imperishable Brahman.
In this way the all-pervading Brahman
Is centred in selfless yajña.

16 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
The person who does not follow this *cakra* of life –
Such a malicious person delights only in his senses,
And lives in vain.

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ।१७।

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ।१८।

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ।१९।

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ।२०।

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ।२१।

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ।२२।

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ।२३।

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ।२४।

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ।२५।

17 But the person who is happy in his ātman,
Who is satisfied with the ātman,
Who is content entirely in the ātman –
Such a person transcends karma.

18 He does not gain anything by doing something,
He does not lose anything by not doing something,
He does not depend on anyone to achieve anything.

19 Therefore, do what should be done,
But do it without attachment.
Work done without attachment
Leads to the Supreme Goal.

20 Indeed, through such work alone
Did Janaka and others attain perfection.
You should work always
For the welfare of the world.

21 People will always imitate what a superior person does.
People will always follow the example he sets.

22 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
I have no duty to perform in all the three worlds.
I have nothing unattained, and nothing to attain.
Yet I continue to work.

23 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
If I were ever to stop working,
People would follow my example.

24 If I stopped working, the worlds would collapse,
I would become the cause of total confusion
And the ruin of all creatures.

25 O Bharata descendant!
The unwise act, attached to work.
The wise should also act, but unattached to work,
Always seeking the welfare of the world.

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम्।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन्।२६।

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते।२७।

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते।२८।

प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु।
तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत्।२९।

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः।३०।

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः।३१।

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम्।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः।३२।

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति।३३।

26 The wise man should not upset ignorant people
Who are work-obsessed,
But by doing all his work with a steady mind
He should set an example of selfless work.

27 All work is performed by the guṇas of Prakṛti.
His ātman deluded by his ego,
Man thinks: *I am the doer.*

28 O mahā-muscled one!
The person who sees the difference between guṇa
and karma,
The person who knows that
The guṇas act upon the guṇas –
Such a person is free from attachment.

29 Those who know this truth should not upset
The dull-witted who are not aware of this truth,
Who are so attached to guṇa and karma
That they are deluded by the guṇas of Prakṛti.

30 Fix your mind on the ātman.
Offer all your karma to me.
Forsake expectations. Give up your ego.
And fight – free of all doubts.

31 All who follow my teaching
With *śraddhā*, and with no ill-will –
They are the ones
Who are free from the fetters of karma.

32 But those who have ill-will
And do not follow my teachings,
They are fools without any knowledge,
They are confused, they are doomed.

33 Even a wise man has to conform
To the dictates of his nature.
All creatures conform to their natures.
How will it help to defy Prakṛti,
Which is your own nature?

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ।३४।

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ।३५।

अर्जुन उवाच

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ।३६।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ।३७।

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ।३८।

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ।३९।

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ।४०।

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ।४१।

34 Delight and disgust are inherent in the senses
And in the objects of the senses.
Do not fall victim to them.
They are your enemies on the road to self-realisation.

35 One's own dharma, however imperfect,
Is better than another's, however perfect.
Better death in one's sva-dharma;
Another's dharma can be dangerous for you."

36 *Arjuna asked:*
"But what is it, O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna,
That makes a man do ill-deeds?
What forces him to do so,
Even against his own will?"

37 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna replied:*
"It is kāma and it is anger, both born from rājās-guṇa.
Keep in mind that these two
Are your mahā-devouring
And mahā-wicked enemies.

38 As smoke obscures fire,
As dust films mirror,
As womb envelops embryo,
So kāma-desire confuses conscience.

39 O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
Kāma is the eternal enemy of the wise.
Kāma is an insatiable fire
Which obscures knowledge.

40 The senses, the mind, and the intellect
Are said to be its abode.
Through them it creates delusion by obscuring reason
And confusing the embodied ātman.

41 O bull-brave Bharata!
Therefore, first control your senses.
Destroy this heinous destroyer
Of knowledge and self-realisation.

[VI:27:42-43]

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ।४२।

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ।४३।

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मयोगो नाम तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥३॥

42 They say the senses excel the body,
The mind excels the senses,
The intellect excels the mind,
And the ātman excels the intellect.

43 O mahā-muscled one!
Remember: the ātman excels the intellect.
Steady the atman by the ātman.
Conquer this enemy called kāma-desire
Which is very difficult to conquer."

This is the third canto titled Karma Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:28:1-8]

Transcreated by P.Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ चतुर्थोऽध्यायः

श्रीभगवानुवाच

ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यास योग

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम्।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत्। १।

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप। २।

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम्। ३।

अर्जुन उवाच

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति। ४।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप। ५।

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया। ६।

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्। ७।

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे। ८।

Canto 4

Jñāna-Karma-Saṁnyāsa Yoga

The Yoga of Knowledge and Renunciation of Action

1 *Śrī Bhagavān Kṛishna said:*
"I imparted this imperishable Yoga to Vivasvat;
Vivasvat passed it on to Manu;
And Manu imparted it to Ikṣvāku.

2 A continuity of tradition was established in this way,
And the rāja-ṛṣis came to know of it.
However, O destroyer of foes,
In course of time it slowly declined.

3 I have today given you
This supreme, timeless, secret Yoga
Because you are my *bhakta*,
My loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friend."

4 *Arjuna said:*
"But you were born later than Vivasvat.
How is it then that you gave it to him
Before you were born?"

5 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births.
I know all of them,
But you do not, O destroyer of foes.

6 I am unborn, changeless, Lord of all creatures.
By subjugating Prakṛti I give myself birth
Through the power of my māyā.

7 Whenever dharma declines,
O Bharata descendant,
And adharma flourishes,
I incarnate myself.

8 I incarnate myself yuga after yuga
To protect the good,
To destroy evil-doers,
And to re-establish dharma.

[VI:28:9-16]

Transcreated by P. Lal

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन । ९ ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ।१०।

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ।११।

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ।१२।

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ।१३।

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ।१४।

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ।१५।

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ।१६।

9 Who knows the truth of my divine birth and karma,
When he leaves his body, he is not born again.
He attains me, Arjuna.

10 Discarding desire, fear and anger,
Absorbed in me, sheltering in me,
Purified by the tapasyā of knowledge,
Many have attained me.

11 Whichever way people come to me,
I grant their wishes accordingly.
O Pārtha-Arjuna!
People follow my path in different ways.

12 Men worship gods
In the hope of material gain.
In this human world,
Work brings quick success.

13 Though I am the creator of the four castes
On the basis of guṇa and karma,
I am not really their creator
Because I am the changeless one,
Beyond cause and effect.

14 I am not affected by karma,
I have no desire for the fruits of karma.
Anyone who knows me like this
Is not fettered by karma.

15 In the past, seekers of mokṣa knew this,
And then performed action.
When you perform action,
You should follow their example.

16 *What is karma?* and *What is not karma?*
Are questions that perplex even those gifted with insight.
Let me explain karma to you.
Knowing this will free you from everything inauspicious.

[VI:28:17-24]

Transcreated by P. Lal

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ।१७।

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ।१८।

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ।१९।

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ।२०।

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।
शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ।२१।

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ।२२।

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ।२३।

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ।२४।

17 What karma is, you must know;
Also what is forbidden karma,
As well as what is not karma.
Karma is a great mystery.

18 Whoever sees inaction in action,
And action in inaction –
That person is truly intelligent,
He does the correct action,
He is the doer of all action.

19 If you work without desire and expectation,
If your actions are purified
In the fire of knowledge,
Then the wise will describe you as a paṇḍit.

20 When you give up the fruits of action,
When you are content and self-dependent,
Then though you work, you do not really work.

21 Giving up expectation,
Controlling your mind and ātman,
Giving up passiveness,
You work physically with no ill consequences.

22 Content with whatever comes,
Undisturbed by opposites,
Free from envy, serene in success and failure,
You act, but your deeds do not fetter you.

23 When you are free from selfish attachment,
When your mind is steady in knowledge,
When your life is devoted to sacrifice,
Then your karma is completely washed away.

24 The ritual is Brahman, the offering is Brahman,
Given by Brahman in the fire of Brahman –
Such absorption in Brahman leads you to Brahman.

[VI:28:25-33]

Transcreated by P. Lal

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते।
ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ।२५।

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति।
शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति ।२६।

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे।
आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ।२७।

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ।२८।

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे।
प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ।२९।

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति।
सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ।३०।

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम्।
नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ।३१।

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे।
कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ।३२।

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ।३३।

25 Some yogis offer sacrifices to the gods,
Others sacrifice sacrifice itself
In the fire of Brahman.

26 Some offer their hearing,
Others offer their speech and other sense-objects
By disciplining their senses.

27 Some offer the functions of the body,
Others offer the life-breath *prāṇa*
In the fire of the yoga of self-control
Illumined by knowledge.

28 Some offer wealth as sacrifice,
Others offer tapasyā and yoga;
Still others, strict-vowed and dedicated,
Offer studies and learning as sacrifice.

29 Some offer as sacrifice
The *prāṇa-apāna* in-breath and out-breath,
Others practice *prāṇāyāma* breath-control.

30 Others regulate their diet and offer that as sacrifice.
All of them know the meaning of sacrifice,
And all their defects are wiped out
By this form of sacrifice.

31 By eating the nectar of such sacrifice,
They attain the Sanātana Brahman.
Without sacrifice, even this world cannot be attained.
How then is it possible to attain
The other world, O excellent Kaurava?

32 All these different sacrifices
Have the approval of Brahman.
But all of them are based on action.
If you know this, you are free.

33 O chastiser of foes! O Pārtha-Arjuna!
The sacrifice of knowledge is superior
To the sacrifice of wealth.
After all, all action must end in knowledge.

[VI:28:34-41]

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः।३४।

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव।
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि।३५।

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि।३६।

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा।३७।

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते।
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति।३८।

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति।३९।

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्दधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः।४०।

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम्।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय।४१।

Transcreated by P. Lal

34 Be humble, ask questions, serve others.
The wise who know the truth
Will instruct you in knowledge.

35 Once you know this, O Pāṇḍava-Arjuna,
You will never be confused.
You will see all creation
In your ātman and in me.

36 Even if you are the most evil of evil-doers,
This raft of knowledge will ferry you to safety.

37 Just as fire reduces wood into ashes,
The fire of knowledge, Arjuna,
Reduces all karma to ashes.

38 There is nothing in this world that purifies like knowledge.
One realises this in course of time in one's own ātman
After reaching perfection in Yoga.

39 The person who has *śraddhā,*
The person who disciplines his senses,
Achieves this knowledge.
When this knowledge is achieved,
The supreme peace *śānti* is attained.

40 The man without knowledge, the man without śraddhā,
The man who doubts is doomed.
The man who doubts gets neither this world nor the next.
There is no happiness for him.

41 O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
When Yoga purifies your actions,
And knowledge dissipates your doubts,
Your ātman will be steady
And karma will not fetter you.

[VI:28:42]

तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।
छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ।४२।

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगो नाम चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥४॥

42 O descendant of Bharata!
With the sword of knowledge
Destroy these doubts about the ātman
Which are the result of ignorance.
Steady yourself in Yoga, and stand up!"

This is the fourth canto titled Jñāna-Karma-Saṁnyāsa Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:29:1-7]

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ पञ्चमोऽध्यायः

कर्मसंन्यास योग

अर्जुन उवाच

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् । १ ।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते । २ ।

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते । ३ ।

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितःसम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् । ४ ।

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति । ५ ।

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति । ६ ।

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते । ७ ।

Canto 5

Karma-Saṁnyāsa Yoga

The Yoga of Karma and Renunciation

1 *Arjuna asked:*
"Krishna! First you recommend renunciation of action,
Then you recommend performance of action.
Which is better? Tell me clearly."

2 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"The Yoga of renunciation and the Yoga of action –
Both lead to liberation.
But action is superior to renunciation.

3 O mahā-muscled Arjuna!
The true saṁnyāsī neither likes nor dislikes.
Free from the world's dualities,
He easily attains freedom.

4 The ignorant, not the paṇḍits,
Say that the two are different.
If you are steady in either,
The fruits of both are attained.

5 The performer of action and the renouncer of action –
Both reach the same goal.
Who sees both as the same – he sees the truth.

6 O mahā-muscled Arjuna!
Even the renunciation of action
Requires the performance of action.
It is the muni who acts with wisdom
Who soon attains Brahman.

7 Dedicated to Yoga, his ātman purified,
His body disciplined, his senses controlled,
Who sees his ātman as the Ātman in all –
Such a person remains untainted
Even when performing action.

[VI:29:8-16]

Transcreated by P. Lal

नैव किंचित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वसन् ।८।

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ।९।

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ।१०।

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ।११।

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ।१२।

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ।१३।

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ।१४।

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ।१५।

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ।१६।

8 Though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling,
Eating, walking, sleeping, breathing,
The dedicated knower of truth should say:
I do nothing at all.

9 Though speaking, letting go, grasping,
Opening and closing the eyes,
He is convinced it is only the senses which are working
On the objects of the senses.

10 A person who shelters in Brahman
And gives up selfish attachment
Is not tainted even by ill deeds,
Just as a lotus leaf is not tainted by slime.

11 The karma-yogi works with the body,
The mind, intelligence and the senses,
But he forsakes selfish attachment
In order to purify the ātman.

12 Forsaking the fruits of action,
The karma-yogi attains everlasting śānti.
But the unsteady worker, motivated by kāma,
Is trapped in the fruits of karma.

13 The self-controlled person, mentally renouncing karma,
Rests happily in the body, the city of the nine gates,
Neither acting himself nor forcing others to act.

14 The Lord is not concerned with the doing of the deed,
Or the deed itself, or the fruits of the deed.
One's own nature is responsible.

15 The Radiant All-Pervading Lord
Is not concerned with ill-deed or good-deed.
Knowledge is obscured by ignorance,
And human beings delude themselves.

16 But when ignorance is removed
By knowledge of the ātman –
That knowledge is like the sun,
It reveals the Supreme Brahman.

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ।१७।

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ।१८।

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ।१९।

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ।२०।

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ।२१।

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ।२२।

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ।२३।

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ।२४।

17 Whose intelligence is in Brahman, whose ātman is in Brahman,
Who is steady in Brahman, whose fulfilment is in Brahman,
Whose imperfections have been removed by knowledge –
Such a person is never born again.

18 A learned and humble paṇḍit looks with an equal eye
On a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and an outcaste.

19 Because he is steady in immaculate Brahman,
The serene mind of such a person
Conquers all the problems of life.

20 The knower of Brahman whose mind is steady in Brahman
Never gets deluded:
The pleasant does not exhilarate him,
The unpleasant does not depress him.

21 Whose ātman is unattached to worldly matters,
Such a person rejoices in the ātman.
His ātman is devoted to Brahman-meditation,
And he attains everlasting happiness.

22 The pleasures of sense-contacts always give birth to sorrow.
O son of Kuntī! They begin and they end.
The wise never seek pleasure in them.

23 He alone is happy who is steadfast in this life itself,
Who overcomes kāma and anger before casting off this body.

24 He alone is a yogi
Whose happiness is within himself,
Whose repose is within himself,
Whose radiance is within himself.
He attains Brahman-nirvāṇa, he becomes Brahman.

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः।
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः।२५।

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम्।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम्।२६।

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ।२७।

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः।२८।

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम्।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति।२९।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मसंन्यासयोगो नाम पञ्चमोऽध्यायः॥५॥

25 He is the ṛṣi whose doubts have been dispelled,
Whose defects have been removed,
Who delights in the welfare of all,
And whose ātman is disciplined.
He achieves Brahman-nirvāṇa.

26 He alone is the ascetic whose mind is controlled,
Who has overcome kāma and anger,
Who has realised his ātman.
He attains Brahman-nirvāṇa at all times.

27 Shutting out external enjoyments,
His gaze fixed between his eyebrows,
Regulating in-breath *prāṇa* and out-breath *apāna*
Between his nostrils;

28 Disciplining his senses, mind and intellect,
Deeply devoted to mokṣa,
Free from greed, fear and anger –
Such a muni is forever free.

29 Know me as the enjoyer of all yajñas and tapasyās,
Know me as the Lord of all the worlds,
Know me as the friend of all creatures –
And you will attain śānti."

This is the fifth canto titled Karma-Saṁnyāsa Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śastra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:30:1-7]

Transcreated by P.Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ षष्ठोऽध्यायः

आत्मसंयम योग

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः । १ ।

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन । २ ।

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते । ३ ।

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते । ४ ।

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः । ५ ।

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् । ६ ।

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः । ७ ।

Canto 6
Ātma-Saṁyama Yoga
The Yoga of Meditation

1 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"The true saṁnyāsī and the true yogi act
Without expecting the fruits of their actions.
The person who gives up the sacred fire or gives up action
Is not the true saṁnyāsī or yogi.

2 O Pāṇḍava-Arjuna, realise that saṁnyasā is renunciation,
And renunciation is yoga – the yoga of selfless action.
You can never be a yogi unless you discard selfish desire.

3 The muni who seeks to achieve yoga
Uses karma as his means.
When yoga is achieved, serenity takes over.

4 When there is no attachment
To sense-objects or to karma,
When all selfish desires are discarded –
That state is called Yoga.

5 The ātman is the means of spiritual progress.
On no account should it be harmed.
It is your best friend.
Do not make it your worst enemy.

6 The ātman is the friend of anyone
Who uses it to conquer himself.
It is an enemy of anyone
Who does not use it to conquer himself.

7 The person who has conquered his ātman,
Whose mind is tranquil, who rests in the Supreme Ātman –
Such a person remains serene
In heat and cold, joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour.

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः । ८ ।

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते । ९ ।

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ।१०।

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ।११।

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ।१२।

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ।१३।

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।१४।

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ।१५।

8 The person whose ātman is satisfied
With spiritual wisdom and material knowledge,
Who has conquered his senses, and risen above all these,
And treats earth, stone and gold equally –
He is the true yogi.

9 He is the truly excellent one who looks serenely
At well-wishers, friends, the indifferent ones,
Mediators, enemies, relatives,
As well as the good and the wicked.

10 Living in solitude, all by himself,
With disciplined mind and ātman,
Free from expectations, free from possessiveness,
A yogi should strive for absorption in the ātman.

11 A yogi should seat himself in a clean spot,
Not too high and not too low,
Spread over with kuśa-grass,
Deerskin, and a piece of cloth.

12 There, focusing his mind on a single goal,
Subduing the demands of the mind and the senses,
He should practise yoga to purify his ātman.

13 And he must hold his body still,
His head and neck erect,
Not let his eyes stray in any direction,
But gaze only at the tip of his nose.

14 With a serene ātman, and a disciplined, fearless mind,
An avowed brahmacārī, focusing his mind on me,
He should concentrate on me as the ultimate goal.

15 Thus absorbed, thus steadfast in his ātman,
His mind focused on me,
The yogi will attain śānti,
And the bliss beyond śānti,
Which is known as Nirvāṇa.

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।
न चाति स्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ।१६।

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ।१७।

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।
निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ।१८।

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।
योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ।१९।

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ।२०।

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ।२१।

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ।२२।

तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ।२३।

16 Yoga is not for the person
Who eats too much or too little.
Neither is it for him, O Arjuna,
Who sleeps too much or too little.

17 Yoga destroys despair.
It is only for the moderate
In eating and resting, in sleeping and waking,
And in every other physical activity.

18 When the mind is completely controlled,
When it is serene in the ātman,
When it is free from kāma-desire,
Then only is a person described as steadfast.

19 The yogi whose mind is controlled,
Whose ātman is established in yoga,
Can be compared to a lamp in a windless spot,
Which never flickers.

20 When the mind becomes tranquil
By humbly practising yoga,
When by seeing one's ātman in one's ātman
One rejoices in one's ātman;

21 When one experiences the infinite bliss
Which comes by transcending the senses –
An experience of that ultimate blissful Truth
Than which nothing else satisfies –

22 After obtaining which, there is nothing higher to obtain;
After obtaining which, one remains untouched
Even by the deepest of sorrows;

23 After obtaining which, one is freed
From any kind of suffering –
That is known as Yoga.
And this Yoga should be assiduously practised
With an undisturbed mind.

Transcreated by P. Lal

संकल्पप्रभवान्कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ।२४।

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किंचिदपि चिन्तयेत् ।२५।

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ।२६।

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ।२७।

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ।२८।

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ।२९।

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ।३०।

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ।३१।

24 Completely abandoning all kāma
That is born of worldly expectations,
Controlling the senses by disciplining the mind;

25 Patiently and wisely discriminating,
With the mind established in the ātman,
He will attain tranquillity.
He must not think of anything else.

26 Whenever the fickle and restless mind
Strays from its goal,
You must subdue it,
And restore it back to the ātman.

27 Only that yogi finds the supreme bliss
Whose mind is serene,
Whose passions are stilled,
Who is one with Brahman,
Who is free from imperfections.

28 Only the yogi who is free from imperfections,
Who joyfully strives for the union
Of his ātman with Brahman,
Finds supreme bliss.

29 With his ātman steady in yoga,
He sees everything equally:
He sees the Ātman in all beings,
And all beings in the Ātman.

30 He who sees me in all things
And all things in me,
He is never far from me
And I am never far from him.

31 Who worships me and lives in me,
Whoever that person be,
No matter what the circumstances –
That yogī achieves unity of being,
Seeing me in all things.

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ।३२।

अर्जुन उवाच

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन।
एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ।३३।

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम्।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ।३४।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम्।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ।३५।

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ।३६।

अर्जुन उवाच

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः।
अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ।३७।

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ।३८।

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ।३९।

Transcreated by P. Lal

32 Whoever sees everyone's joy and sorrow
As if it were his own –
That person, Arjuna, is the supreme yogi."

33 *Arjuna said:*
"You have explained to me this yoga of serenity,
But my restless mind, Madhusūdana-Krishna
Does not understand what you say.

34 For the mind, Krishna, is powerful,
Fickle, violent, uncontrollable.
Harnessing the mind is as difficult
As harnessing the wind."

35 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Without a doubt, O mahā-muscled one,
The mind is restless and difficult to control.
But constant practice and detachment,
O Kaunteya-Arjuna, help to control it.

36 It is my belief
That yoga is very difficult to achieve
For a person whose ātman is not disciplined.
But the person whose ātman is disciplined
Can achieve it by struggling nobly."

37 *Arjuna said:*
"Krishna, what happens to the person
Who has *śraddhā* but fails in yoga,
Whose mind wanders, who loses control?

38 O mahā-muscled one!
Does that person not plummet down
From the path of Brahman,
Doomed like a tattered cloud?
Does he not fail in both knowledge and action?

39 Dispel this doubt of mine, Krishna.
There is no other person except you
Who can remove this doubt."

[VI:30:40-46]

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते।
न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ।४०।

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ।४१।

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ।४२।

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ।४३।

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ।४४।

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ।४५।

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ।४६।

Transcreated by P. Lal

40 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Pārtha-Arjuna! Do not fear.
The struggle for virtue, dear one, *tāta*,
Is never wasted,
Neither here nor hereafter.

41 The person who fails to succeed in yoga
Reaches the worlds of the blessed,
And lives there for a very long time;
And then is reborn in the homes
Of the righteous and the prosperous.

42 Or such a one is reborn
In a family of wise yogis –
A difficult birth to obtain, very difficult.

43 Then, O Kaurava descendant,
He regains his former intelligence,
And once again he strives for perfection.

44 One's primary struggle continues its momentum
In spite of oneself.
Even a person who merely inquires about yoga
Is superior to the mouther of vacuous Brahma-Veda-words.

45 The yogi who perseveres assiduously
Revolves through many births,
And purified of all imperfections
Finally reaches the supreme goal.

46 Therefore, Arjuna, be a yogi.
A yogi is superior
To those who do tapasyā,
To those who are learned,
And to those who do physical work.

[VI:30:47]

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ।४७।

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे आत्मसंयमयोगो नाम षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥६॥

47 And even among yogis he is the best
Who is full of *śraddhā*
And worships me with his ātman.
This is my belief.

This is the sixth canto titled Ātma-Saṁyama Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:31:1-7]

Transcreated by P.Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ सप्तमोऽध्यायः
ज्ञानविज्ञान योग

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः।
असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु। १।

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः।
यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते। २।

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः। ३।

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च।
अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा। ४।

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत्। ५।

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा। ६।

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनंजय।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव। ७।

[VI:31:1-7]

Canto 7

Jñāna-Vijñāna Yoga

The Yoga of Knowledge

1 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"O Pārtha-Arjuna! Listen to me carefully.
There is no doubt at all
That you will get to know me fully
If your mind is focused on me,
And if you take shelter in me through yoga.

2 I will give you in totality
Spiritual wisdom as well as practical knowledge.
After knowing this
There is nothing else to know.

3 Out of thousands only one perhaps
Strives for perfection,
And one perhaps out of those who strive
Actually attains me.

4 My Prakṛti is eightfold:
Earth, water, fire, air, ether,
Mind, intellect, ego.

5 O mahā-muscled one!
This is the lower Prakṛti.
But there is also my higher Prakṛti
Which is different –
The principle of life which sustains the universe.

6 These two are the yoni of all life.
I am the sole Creator and Destroyer
Of the entire cosmos.

7 O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Apart from me there is nothing.
Everything depends on me
Like pearls threaded on a string.

[VI:31:8-15]

Transcreated by P. Lal

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु । ८ ।

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु । ९ ।

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।१०।

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ।
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ।११।

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ।१२।

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ।१३।

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ।१४।

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।
माययापहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ।१५।

8 O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
I am the essence of water,
The brilliance of the sun and the moon,
I am the sacred syllable Auṁ in the Vedas,
I am sound in ether, and manliness in man.

9 I am the sacred fragrance in earth,
I am the dazzle in fire,
I am the life principle in all creatures,
I am the tapasyā in those who practise tapasyā.

10 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
I am the eternal seed in all creatures,
I am the wisdom of the wise,
I am the glory of the glorious.

11 I am the strength of the strong,
Devoid of desire and passion.
O bull-brave Bharata!
I am kāma-desire too,
Kāma that does not transgress dharma.

12 They all proceed from me –
The states of sāttva, rajas and tamas.
But do understand:
They are in me, I am not in them.

13 These three manifestations
Of the three guṇas deceive the world,
And it fails to recognise me,
Because I am the Indestructible Reality
Beyond the three guṇas.

14 Very difficult it is indeed
To see through this divine māyā of the guṇas.
But those who take shelter in me
Are able to see through this māyā.

15 The evil-doers, the deluded, the scoundrelly,
And the ignorant are victims of māyā,
And follow anti-divine inclinations.

[VI:31:16-23]

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ।१६।

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ।१७।

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ।१८।

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ।१९।

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ।२०।

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ।२१।

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान् ।२२।

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ।२३।

Transcreated by P. Lal

16 There are four types of good people
Who worship me, O bull-brave Bharata:
The grief-stricken, the one eager to learn,
The seeker of wealth, and the wise man.

17 The wise man, steadfast, with single-minded bhakti,
Is the best of these.
Exceedingly does the wise man love me,
And I love him.

18 They are all very noble indeed,
But the wise one is like my own self.
His ātman is steadfast
And is devoted to me as the supreme goal.

19 After many births, the wise man
Finally reposes in me,
Convinced that I am all in all.
Such a mahātmā is very rare.

20 There are others deluded by various kāmas,
Who adhere to various rituals,
And worship other gods,
According to their natures.

21 I make firm the *śraddhā* of any *bhakta*,
No matter what form he worships.

22 Firm in that *śraddhā*,
He progresses in worship
And obtains his desires –
Which I alone fulfil.

23 But the fruits obtained by these people
Of small intelligence are small.
The worshippers of the gods go to the gods,
Who have bhakti for me come to me.

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ।२४।

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ।२५।

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ।२६।

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।
सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्गे यान्ति परंतप ।२७।

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ।२८।

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ।२९।

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ।३०।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगो नाम सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥ ७ ॥

Transcreated by P. Lal

24 I am formless,
But the ignorant think I have form.
They do not know my real nature,
Which is supreme, transcendental,
Unmanifested and changeless.

25 I am veiled by yoga-māyā,
And all do not see me.
I am birthless and deathless.
This deluded world does not understand me.

26 I know what was, is, and will be,
But no one knows me, Arjuna.

27 Deluded by the duality of life, O foe-crusher,
By delight and disgust,
From their very birth, O descendant of Bharata,
All beings are flung into confusion.

28 Those who do virtuous deeds,
Whose ill-deeds have come to an end –
They are freed from the duality of life,
And they worship me with total dedication.

29 Those who seek liberation from old age and death –
They seek shelter in me. They know Brahman.
They know *adhyātman* and karma in its entirety.

30 With a steady mind,
Even at the time of death itself,
They know me fully
As the *adhibhūta*, *adhidaiva* and *adhiyajña*."

This is the seventh canto titled Jñāna-Vijñāna Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:32:1-7]

Transcreated by P.Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथाष्टमोऽध्यायः

अक्षरब्रह्म योग

अर्जुन उवाच

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते। १।

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः। २।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः। ३।

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम्।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर। ४।

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम्।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः। ५।

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम्।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः। ६।

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् । ७।

Canto 8

The Akṣara-Brahma Yoga

The Nature of Brahman

1 *Arjuna said:*
"Puruṣottama-Krishna, what is Brahman,
And adhyātman and karma?
What is adhibhūta, and what is adhidaiva?

2 And how and who is adhiyajña in this body,
Madhusūdana-Krishna?
And how are you attained at the time of death
By those who have disciplined their ātman?"

3 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Brahman is the Indestructible Supreme.
Its existence in separate beings is adhyātman.
Karma is the momentum that commences
The birth of beings.

4 O finest-of-all-embodied-people Arjuna!
Adhibhuta is all that is perishable;
The male divine principle Puruṣa is adhidaiva;
And I alone am the adhiyajña in the human body.

5 Whoever remembers me at the time of death,
Forsaking his body, attains me.
There is no doubt of this.

6 O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
Whatever a person remembers at the time of death,
Forsaking his body, he attains that,
Because he is constantly thinking of that.

7 Therefore, think of me at all times – and fight!
With your mind and intellect focused on me,
You will attain me.
There is no doubt of this.

[VI:32:8-14]

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् । ८ ।

कविं पुराणमनुशासितार-
मणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूप-
मादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् । ९ ।

प्रयाणकाले मनसाचलेन
भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक्
स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ।१०।

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति
विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति
तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ।११।

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ।१२।

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ।१३।

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ।१४।

8 Absolutely unwavering,
Steady in the consistent practice of yoga –
This is the way, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
To attain the Resplendent Supreme Puruṣa.

9 One should contemplate on the Puruṣa
As the All-Knowing, the Ageless Reality,
The Ruler of all, minuter than an atom,
Inconceivable of form, dazzling like the sun,
Beyond the darkness of tamas-ignorance.

10 One achieves the Resplendent Supreme Puruṣa
When, at the time of death,
With unwavering bhakti and the power of yoga,
He focuses his life-breath *prāṇa*
Between his two eyebrows.

11 I will now tell you briefly
Of what those who are wise in the Vedas
Regard as the indestructible sacred syllable Auṁ
Which is achieved when one is free from attachment,
Through the self-control of brahmacarya.

12 Closing the doors of the body,
Restraining the mind and the heart,
Focusing the life-breath *prāṇa* in the head,
Absorbed in yoga –

13 Chanting the single sacred syllable Auṁ
Which is the symbol of Brahman,
And meditating on me –
One forsakes the body
And achieves the Supreme Goal.

14 Pārtha-Arjuna!
I am easily attained by that yogi
Who remembers me constantly
With complete concentration.

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ।१५।

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते।१६।

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः।१७।

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके।१८।

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे।१९।

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति।२०।

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम्।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम।२१।

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।२२।

15 Reaching the supreme perfection,
Such a mahātmā attains me.
For such a person there is no more
Any sorrowful and transitory rebirth.

16 All the worlds, including the realm of Brahmā,
Are subject to rebirth;
But whoever attains me, Kaunteya-Arjuna,
Is never born again.

17 The person who understands day and night
Can also understand that Brahmā's day
Consists of a thousand yugas,
And Brahmā's night also a thousand yugas.

18 When Brahmā's day begins,
The formless unmanifested becomes manifested forms;
When Brahmā's night begins,
The manifested forms dissolve into the unmanifested.

19 And these multitudes of beings
Are born again and again;
They inevitably dissolve when Brahmā's night begins
And inevitably re-emerge when Brahmā's day begins.

20 But beyond this unmanifested
There is another Unmanifested,
Which is the Ultimate Reality,
Which does not dissolve though all beings dissolve.

21 This Indestructible and Unmanifested Reality
Has been described as the Supreme Goal.
This is my state of Supreme Perfection,
Attaining which, one is never born again.

22 Pārtha-Arjuna!
This Supreme Puruṣa is attained
By bhakti and nothing else.
This Puruṣa dwells in all beings,
And all beings dwell in him.

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ।२३।

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ।२४।

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ।२५।

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ।२६।

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ।२७।

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव
दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा
योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ।२८।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अक्षरब्रह्मयोगो नामाष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥८॥

Transcreated by P.Lal

23 O bull-brave Bharata!
I will now tell you of the Cosmic Time Kāla
By which yogis are born again,
And the Cosmic Time Kāla
By which they are not born again.

24 Fire, brilliance, daytime, the bright fortnight,
And the six-month course of the northern sun –
This takes the knowers of Brahman to Brahman.

25 Smoke, night-time, the dark fortnight,
And the six-month course of the southern sun –
This takes the yogi to the lunar brilliance,
But such a one returns.

26 Rightly are they considered eternal,
These bright and dark paths:
For one leads to endless non-return,
The other to endless return.

27 The yogi who understands the nature
Of these paths is not deceived.
Therefore, Pārtha-Arjuna,
At all times steady yourself in yoga.

28 The yogi who knows this
Is above the rewards offered
In the Vedas, yajñas, tapasyā and charity –
He alone attains the eternal Supreme Reality."

This is the eighth canto titled The Akṣara-Brahma Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ नवमोऽध्यायः

राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् । १ ।

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् । २ ।

अश्रद्दधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि । ३ ।

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः । ४ ।

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः । ५ ।

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय । ६ ।

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् । ७ ।

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् । ८ ।

Canto 9

The Rāja-Vidyā-Rāja-Guhya Yoga
The Secret of Work

1 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"I will give you the profoundest of secrets
Because you are not a fault-finder.
This synthesis of practical knowledge and spiritual realisation
Will free you from everything inauspicious.

2 This is the ultimate knowledge, the ultimate secret,
This is the supreme purifier, easily achievable,
This is full of dharma, this is imperishable.

3 Those who have no *śraddhā* for this dharma
Fail to attain me, O foe-subduer,
And return to the cycle of death and rebirth.

4 My unmanifested presence pervades the universe.
All beings exist in me,
But I am not present in them.

5 Look at my divine Yoga –
Even beings are not in me.
Though it creates and sustains beings
My Ātman is not limited to them.

6 You must understand that,
Like the mighty wind resting in the sky
Though it moves everywhere,
So all created life rests in me.

7 O son of Kuntī!
When a kalpa, a day of Brahmā, ends,
All creatures return to my Prakṛti;
When another kalpa begins, I create them again.

8 I vitalise my Prakṛti,
And the entire multitude of creation
Is born again and again
Under the sway of Prakṛti.

[VI:33:9-17]

Transcreated by P. Lal

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय ।
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु । ९ ।

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ।१०।

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ।११।

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ।१२।

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ।१३।

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।१४।

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ।१५।

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ।१६।

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।
वेद्यं पवित्रमोंकार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ।१७।

9 But this karma does not bind me,
O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
I remain neutral and unattached.

10 Under my supervision, Kaunteya-Arjuna,
Prakṛti produces all moving and unmoving life.
This is the cause of the cycle
Of birth and rebirth in this world.

11 The ignorant fail to recognise me in my human form
Because they are not aware of me
As the Supreme Lord of all beings – Maheśvara.

12 They are like deluded rākṣasaas and anti-gods,
Their hopes are vain, their deeds are vain,
Their knowledge is vain.
They are utterly bewildered.

13 But the mahātmās, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
Who take shelter in my divine nature and know me
As the imperishable origin of the universe –
They worship me and none else.

14 Chanting my praises with strict-vowed bhakti,
They adore me constantly with humble reverence.

15 Still others worship me by offering their knowledge
In the best way they can –
Seeing me as One, or as Separate,
Or as Many, or as Universal-Formed.

16 I am the Vedic ritual, I am the Yajña,
I am the sacred food offered to the pitṛs,
I am the sacred Auṣadha-vegetation,
I am the mantra, I am the sacred ghee,
I am the sacred fire and the sacred oblation.

17 I am the Father and Mother of the universe,
I am its Sustainer and Grandfather,
I am that which should be known,
I am the Purifier, I am the sacred syllable Auṁ,
I am the Ṛk and Sāma and Yajur Vedas.

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम्।१८।

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन।१९।

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोक-
मश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान्।२०।

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना
गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते।२१।

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्।२२।

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम्।२३।

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते।२४।

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम्।२५।

18 I am the Goal, the Supporter, the Lord,
The Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend,
The Origin, the Dissolution, the Basis,
The Storehouse and the Undecaying Seed of Life.

19 I radiate heat, I send and withhold rain,
I am non-death and death.
Arjuna, I am what is,
And I am also what is not.

20 The learned in the three Vedas worship me
By performing yajñas, and drink the soma juice.
Purified of their ill-deeds, they pray for heaven.
Reaching the heaven of Surendra-Indra,
They enjoy the pleasures of the gods.

21 After enjoying the profuse pleasures
Of the world of heaven, their merits are exhausted,
And they return to the mortal world.
Those who follow the dharma of the three Vedas
And pray for worldly pleasures are constantly reborn.

22 But those who meditate on me and none else
Are the ones who truly worship me with unswerving
devotion,
And to these I give what they do not have
And preserve what they already have.

23 Even those *bhaktas* who worship other gods
With *śraddhā*, worship really me.
O son of Kuntī, their *śraddhā* is genuine,
Though their means is unorthodox.

24 For I alone am the enjoyer
And I am the Lord of all yajñas,
But because they do not really know me,
They are born again.

25 Those who worship the gods go to the gods,
Those who worship the pitṛs go to the pitṛs,
Those who worship the spirits go to the spirits,
My worshippers come to me.

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ।२६।

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ।२७।

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।
संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ।२८।

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ।२९।

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ।३०।

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रति जानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ।३१।

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ।३२।

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ।३३।

26 I will accept any gift,
A fruit, a flower, a leaf, even water,
If it is offered with a pure ātman,
With bhakti and with love.

27 Whatever you do, Kaunteya-Arjuna,
Whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice,
Whatever you give in charity,
Whatever tapasyā you practise,
Do it as an offering to me.

28 This will free you from the bondage of karma,
And all auspicious and inauspicious fruits of karma;
With your ātman firm in the Yoga of Renunciation,
You will come to me.

29 All beings are the same to me:
I hate none, I love none.
But those who worship me with bhakti –
They are in me, and I am in them.

30 If even the wickedest person worships me,
With bhakti for me and none else,
Consider such a person as good
For he has chosen the right path.

31 Soon will he become a dharmātmā,
And attain eternal śānti-peace.
Know this for certain, Kaunteya-Arjuna:
No *bhakta* of mine is ever rejected.

32 Sheltering in me, Pārtha-Arjuna,
All achieve the Supreme Goal –
Even those born in wicked wombs,
Women, Vaiśyas, Śūdras.

33 Small wonder then that pious Brahmins
And rāja-ṛṣi *bhaktas* find me.
Give up this brief joyless world,
And worship me, Pārtha-Arjuna.

[VI:33:34]

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ।३४।

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगो नाम नवमोऽध्यायः ॥ ९ ॥

34 Be in me. Be my *bhakta.*
Worship me. Namaskāra me.
With me as your Supreme Goal,
With a dedicated ātman,
You will surely come to me."

This is the ninth canto titled The Rāja-Vidyā-Rāja-Guhya Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-shāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:34:1-8]

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ दशमोऽध्यायः

विभूति योग

श्रीभगवानुवाच

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः।
यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया। १।

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः।
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः। २।

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम्।
असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते। ३।

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षगा सत्यं दमः शमः।
सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च। ४।

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः।
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः। ५।

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा।
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः। ६।

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।
सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः। ७।

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः। ८।

Canto 10
Vibhūti Yoga
The Universal Glory

1 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Listen to my supreme teaching, O mahā-muscled one,
Which you are pleased to hear,
And which I speak for your welfare.

2 Neither the gods nor the mahā-ṛṣis can know my origin,
For I am the origin of the gods and the mahā-ṛṣis.

3 Whoever knows me as birthless, and without beginning,
The Supreme Lord of the Universe –
Alone of all mortals he is undeluded,
He is freed from all taint and defect.

4 Intellect, knowledge, vision, forbearance,
Truth, self-control, serenity,
Joy, sorrow, being, non-being,
Fear and fearlessness,

5 Ahiṁsā, equanimity, contentment, tapasyā,
Charity, fame, lack of fame –
All these different human emotions
Arise from me alone.

6 The seven mahā-ṛṣis and the four Manus,
Founders of the human race, were born of my mind.
From them originated all the world's life.

7 This is the truth. No doubt that he
Who knows the truth of my divine glory –
He is the unwavering yogi.

8 I am the source of everything –
Everything evolves from me.
Thinking in this manner,
The wise lovingly worship me.

[VI:34:9-17]

Transcreated by P.Lal

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम्।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च। ९ ।

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम्।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते।१०।

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता।११।

अर्जुन उवाच

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान्।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम्।१२।

आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा।
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे।१३।

सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव।
न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः।१४।

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम।
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते।१५।

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः।
याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि।१६।

कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन्।
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया।१७।

9 Their minds immersed in me,
Their senses absorbed in me,
Enlightening each other, singing my praises,
They are content, they are happy.

10 And I enlighten them with Buddhi-Yoga,
And they come to me,
Ever steadfast, lovingly worshipping me.

11 I dwell in their ātman,
And my compassion like a glowing lamp of wisdom
Dissipates their ignorant darkness."

12 *Arjuna said:*
"You are the Supreme Brahman,
The Supreme Abode, the Supreme Purifier,
The Self-Glowing Eternal Birthless Puruṣa,
The Primal Divinity.

13 The ṛṣis, the deva-ṛṣi Nārada,
And Asita, Devala and Vyāsa
Have extolled you as Eternal;
And this is now your own revelation.

14 O Keśava-Krishna!
All that you say to me is true.
Truly, O Bhagavān, neither the gods
Nor the Dānava anti-gods know your essence.

15 You alone know yourself by yourself,
O transcendent Puruṣottama-Krishna.
You are the Source of life, the Lord of creatures,
God of gods, Lord of the world, Deva-deva, Jagat-pate.

16 Therefore, speak to me of your divine glory
Which proclaims your existence
And with which you pervade and sustain the worlds.

17 How should I constantly think of you
If I wish to know you, O Yogī?
O revered Bhagavān,
What are the means by which I should think of you?

[VI:34:18-25]

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन।
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम्।१८।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः।
प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे।१९।

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च।२०।

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान्।
मरीचिर्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी।२१।

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः।
इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना।२२।

रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम्।
वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम्।२३।

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम्।
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः।२४।

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम्।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः।२५।

Transcreated by P. Lal

18 O Janārdana-Krishna!
Narrate your Yoga and glory to me in detail.
Such nectar from your lips is what I desire.
Never satiated, I yearn for more and more of it."

19 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"O finest of the Kauravas!
I shall narrate to you my divine glories
In the order of their prominence –
Otherwise there is no end to them.

20 O Guḍākeśa-Arjuna!
I am the ātman in the heart of all life.
I am the beginning, middle and end of all life.

21 I am Viṣṇu among the Ādityas,
I am the glorious Sun among heavenly bodies,
I am Marīci among winds,
I am the Moon among planets.

22 Of the Vedas I am Sāma-Veda,
Of the gods I am Vāsava-Indra,
Of the senses I am the mind,
And I am conscious reasoning in living beings.

23 I am Śaṅkara-Śīva among the Rudras,
I am Vitteśa-Kubera among yakṣas and rākṣasas,
I am Pāvaka-Agni among the Vasus,
I am Meru among mountains.

24 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
Know me as Bṛhaspati among priests;
I am Skanda-Kārtikeya among generals,
I am the Ocean among expanses of water.

25 Of mahā-ṛṣis I am Bhṛgu,
Of words I am the sole syllable Auṁ,
Of yajñas I am Japa-yajña,
Of steadfast objects I am the Himālaya.

[VI:34:26-33]

Transcreated by P. Lal

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ।२६।

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ।२७।

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ।२८।

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।
पितॄणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ।२९।

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ।३०।

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ।३१।

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ।३२।

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ।३३।

26 I am the Aśvattha fig-tree among trees,
I am Nārada among deva-ṛṣis,
I am Citraratha among gandharvas,
I am Kapila-muni among the Siddha-saints.

27 Among horses I am Uccaiḥśravas,
Born when the ocean was churned for nectar;
Among magnificent elephants I am Airāvata,
Among human beings I am king.

28 Among weapons I am the thunderbolt,
Among cows I am Kāmadhenu the wish-fulfilling cow,
I am Kandarpa, sexual desire, reproducer of life.
Among serpents I am Vāsuki.

29 Among nāga snakes I am Ananta,
Among creatures of the sea I am Varuṇa,
Among the *pitṛs* I am Āryaman,
Among suppressors of the senses I am Yama.

30 I am Prahlāda among the Daitya anti-gods,
I am Cosmic Time Kāla among measures of time,
Among animals I am the Indra-of-beasts, the lion,
Among birds I am Vinatā's son Garuḍa.

31 Among purifiers I am the wind,
Among wielders of weapons I am Rāma,
Among fishes I am the *makara*-crocodile,
Among rivers I am the Jahnāvī-Gaṅgā.

32 O Arjuna! Of all that is flux
I am the beginning, the middle and the end,
Among wisdoms I am knowledge of the ātman,
I am the truth among disputes.

33 I am A among letters,
I am the joining Dvandva of compound words,
I am indestructible Cosmic Time Kāla,
I am the universe-faced Sustainer of the universe.

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।
कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ।३४।

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।
मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ।३५।

द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।
जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ।३६।

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनंजयः ।
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ।३७।

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम् ।
मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ।३८।

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ।३९।

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।
एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ।४०।

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसंभवम् ।४१।

34 I am all-annihilating Death,
I am the origin of all that shall be born.
Of female virtues I am fame, beauty, sweet speech,
Memory, intuition, patience and forbearance.

35 Among sacred chants I am Bṛhat-sāma,
Among metres I am the Gāyatrī,
Among months I am the Mārgaśīrṣa,
Among seasons I am spring full of flowers.

36 I am the gambling of the deceitful gambler,
I am the strength of the strong,
I am victory, I am struggle,
I am the goodness of the good.

37 I am Vāsudeva-Krishna among the Vṛṣṇis,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna among the Pāṇḍavas,
I am Vyāsa among the munis,
Among poets I am Uśanas.

38 Among punishers I am the sceptre,
I am the statesmanship of the successful,
I am the silence of the secretive,
I am the wisdom of the wise.

39 I am the seed of all life, Arjuna.
Nothing moving or unmoving exists without me.

40 O foe-crushing hero!
There is no end to my divine glory.
This is only a brief account
Of my inexhaustible divine glory.

41 Whatever is glorious, brilliant and powerful –
Is only a fragment of my divine splendour.

[VI:34:42]

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्।४२।

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विभूतियोगो नाम दशमोऽध्यायः ॥१०॥
ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

42 But what use to you
Are all these manifold details, Arjuna?
Just know that I am, and this world exists
With but a minute fraction of my glory."

This is the tenth canto titled Vibhūti Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:35:1-8]

Transcreated by P.Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथैकादशोऽध्यायः

विश्वरूपदर्शन योग

अर्जुन उवाच

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम्।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम। १ ।

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया।
त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम्। २ ।

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर।
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम। ३ ।

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो।
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम्। ४ ।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च। ५ ।

पश्यादित्यान्वसून्रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा।
बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत। ६ ।

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम्।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्द्रष्टुमिच्छसि। ७ ।

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्। ८ ।

Canto 11

Viśva-Rūpa-Darśana Yoga

The Cosmic Multi-Revelation

1 *Arjuna said:*
"Your supreme grace has removed my delusion.
You have explained to me
The secrets of the innermost Ātman.

2 O lotus-eyed one! I have heard in detail
About the creation and dissolution of life.
I have also heard
Of your inexhaustible mahā-magnificence.

3 O Parameśvara! O Supreme Lord!
Indeed it is so about your Ātman.
But, O Puruṣottama! O finest of men!
Grant me a revelation of your divine form.

4 Lord of Yoga! Yogeśvara! If you think me worthy,
Grant me a darshan of your imperishable form."

5 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Behold, O Pārtha-Arjuna:
My divine forms, various-coloured, various-shaped,
Hundreds and thousands of them.

6 O descendant of Bharata!
Behold the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras,
The twin Aśvins and the Maruts.
Behold many marvels never seen before.

7 O Guḍākeśa-Arjuna! See the entire cosmos,
All moving and unmoving life, centred in my body.
See whatever else you wish to see.

8 I will grant you spiritual vision
To witness my Yogeśvara form –
Your mortal eyes are unable to behold it."

[VI:35:9-16]

संजय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम्।९।

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम्।
अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम्।१०।

दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम्।
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम्।११।

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता।
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः।१२।

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा।
अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा।१३।

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनंजयः।
प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत।१४।

अर्जुन उवाच

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे
सर्वांस्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान्।
ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थ-
मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान्।१५।

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं
पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम्।
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं
पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप।१६।

Transcribed by P.Lal

9 *Sañjaya said:*
Saying this, O rājā,
Hari-Krishna Yogeśvara revealed
His divine form to Pārtha-Arjuna.

10 A dazzling darshan!
Possessing numerous mouths and eyes,
Glittering with many divine ornaments,
Wielding many uplifted divine weapons;

11 Divinely garlanded and dressed,
Divinely scented and anointed,
The all-wonderful, universe-faced infinite Divinity.

12 Were a thousand suns to explode
Simultaneously in the sky,
Their brilliance might approximate
The splendour of that Mahā-Ātman.

13 And in the body of the God of gods,
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna saw the entire cosmos
Multiple yet one.

14 Awe-struck, hair standing on end,
Horripilating Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Bowed his head in praṇāma, joined his palms in *añjali*,
And eulogised the Divinity.

15 *Arjuna said:*
"O God of gods!
I see all the gods in your body, all variety of life,
I see Brahmā seated on the lotus,
I see Īśa-Śiva, all the ṛṣis,
And the celestial uraga-serpents.

16 O Viśveśvara, Lord of the universe!
O Viśvarūpa, Universe-formed Divinity!
I see your endless form stretching on all sides,
Arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes,
Without beginning, middle or end.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च
तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम्।
पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ता-
द्दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम् ।१७।

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं
त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता
सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ।१८।

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्य-
मनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम्।
पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं
स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम्।१९।

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि
व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः।
दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं
लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन्।२०।

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति
केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति।
स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः
स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ।२१।

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या
विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च।
गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घा
वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे।२२।

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं
महाबाहो बहुबाहूरुपादम्।
बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं
दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम्।२३।

Transcreated by P. Lal

17 I see you with diadem, mace and *cakra*,
Blazing like fire and the sun,
Very difficult to see, blinding the eyes,
An immeasurable mass of radiance
Permeating all the directions.

18 You are the Imperishable, the Supreme,
You are what should be known,
You are the Supreme Refuge of the universe,
You are the Undecaying Guardian of Eternal Dharma,
You are the Ancient Sanātana Puruṣa –
This I do believe.

19 I see you without beginning, middle or end,
Omnipotent, with countless arms.
The sun and the moon are your eyes,
The blazing fire is your mouth.
Your splendour irradiates the universe.

20 O Mahā-Ātman! You alone fill the space
Between heaven and earth and all the directions.
The three worlds see your wonderful and weird form –
And they shake with fear.

21 Myriads of gods merge into you,
Filled with awe, palms joined in anjali,
The hosts of mahā-ṛṣis and Siddhas
Extol you, exclaiming *Svasti! Prosper!*
Chanting praises of your glory.

22 The Rudras, Ādityas, Vasus, Sādhyas,
Viśvadevas, the twin Aśvins,
The Maruts, Uṣnapā-pitṛs, Gandharvas,
Yakṣas, anti-gods, Siddhas –
All look at you, and marvel, and are spellbound.

23 O Mahā-bāho! O Mahā-armed one!
Seeing your limitless form with many mouths, and eyes,
Arms, thighs, feet, stomachs, and fearful teeth –
The worlds are filled with fear and awe,
And so am I.

नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं
व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम्।
दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा
धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो।२४।

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि
दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि।
दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास।२५।

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः
सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः।
भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ
सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः।२६।

वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति
दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि।
केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु
संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः।२७।

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः
समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति।
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा
विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति।२८।

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा
विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः।
तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका-
स्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः।२९।

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता-
ल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः।
तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं
भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो।३०।

24 I see you reach and touch the sky,
Radiant with many colours,
With mouths agape and large flaming eyes,
And in my heart of hearts
I am filled with awe and fear,
My courage deserts me, O Viṣṇu-Krishna,
And peace deserts me too.

25 Grant me your grace, O God of gods,
Have mercy on me,
O Jagannivāsa, O Refuge of the universe!
Seeing your mouths, with fearful teeth
Blazing like the fires of Kāla
At the dissolution of the universe,
I am so confused,
I have lost all sense of direction,
Peace has deserted me.

26 The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and hosts of kings,
Bhīṣma, Droṇa, the charioteer's son Karṇa,
And all our warrior chiefs –

27 They rush into your fearful mouths
Their heads crushed,
Protruding between your terrifying teeth.

28 Like many streams and rivers rushing into the ocean,
These heroes in the world of humans
Rush into your fiercely flaming mouths.

29 Like moths rushing headlong into the fatal flame,
These people rush headlong to perish in your mouths.

30 O Viṣṇu-Krishna! You chew all the worlds
In your flaming mouths, and lick your lips.
Your shafts of flame surround the entire universe.

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो
नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं
न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम्।३१।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो
लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः।
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः।३२।

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम्।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन्।३३।

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च
कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान्।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा
युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान्।३४।

संजय उवाच

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य
कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी।
नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं
सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य।३५।

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या
जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च।
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति
सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः।३६।

31 O fearful-formed Supreme Divinity!
Tell me who you are.
Namo-astu! I namaskāra you!
Be gracious to me.
I do not know who you are.
O Primeval Divinity, tell me who you are."

32 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"I am here as Cosmic Time Kāla,
The supreme omnipotent destroyer of all the worlds.
Even if you refuse to fight,
Not a single soldier
In these warring armies shall survive.

33 Therefore, stand up, Arjuna, and win glory!
Destroy your enemies and enjoy their kingdom.
I have already killed them all.
O ambidextrous Savyasācī-Arjuna!
You are only the immediate cause.

34 Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Karṇa
And other brave warriors –
All have already been killed by me.
Fight! Do not despair!
You will defeat your enemies."

35 *Sañjaya said:*
Listening to these words of Keśava-Krishna,
Diadem-decorated Kirīṭin-Arjuna
Joined his palms in *añjali*,
And trembling with fear, his voice choking,
He namaskāra-ed and praṇāma-ed Krishna.

36 *Arjuns said:*
"It is right, O Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna,
That the world rejoices and sings your praises,
And rākṣasas scatter in all directions in fear,
And bands of Siddha-devotees namaskāra you.

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन्
गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।
अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास
त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ।३७।

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण-
स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम
त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ।३८।

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः
प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः
पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ।३९।

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।
अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं
सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ।४०।

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं
मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि ।४१।

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि
विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं
तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ।४२।

Transcribed by P. Lal

37 And why should they not?
Why should they not namaskāra the Mahā-Ātman,
The Creator of Brahmā, the Lord of Brahmā,
The Infinite, the God-of-gods Deveśa,
The Refuge-of-the-world Jagannivāsa?
You are deathless,
You are Being and non-Being,
And you are beyond Being and non-Being.

38 You are the Primal Divinity, the Ancient Puruṣa,
The Supreme Refuge of the universe.
You are the Knower, the Known, the Supreme Goal.
O Infinite-Formed One, the universe is rich with you.

39 You are the wind-god Vāyu,
You are the god of death Yama,
You are the fire-god Agni,
You are the god of waters Varuṇa,
You are the moon,
You are Prajāpati Brahmā,
And you are Pra-Pitāmaha Brahmā
The Grancestor of creation.
Namo-namaste-astu!
I worship you a thousand times!
Again and again, *Namo namaste!*

40 May homage and worship flow to you from all quarters!
O Infinite in Power! O Infinite in Prowess!
You are the All-Pervader – you are all.

41 And I have presumed, from love and careless regard,
And unknowingly called you, 'Krishna! Yādava!
Sakhā!'
Treating you as just a loved-and-loving friend,
Unmindful of your glory –

42 In whatever way I have been disrespectful to you,
In laughter, walking, resting, sitting, eating,
Whether alone or in company,
I beg of you, Acyuta-Krishna,
O Immeasurable One, forgive me.

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान्।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ।४३।

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं
प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम्।
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः
प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम्।४४।

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा
भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे।
तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास।४५।

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त-
मिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव।
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन
सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते।४६।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं
रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात्।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं
यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम्।४७।

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानै-
र्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः।
एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके
द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर।४८।

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो
दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम्।
व्यपेतभी. प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं
तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य।४९।

43 For you are the Father of the worlds,
Of their moving and unmoving life,
You are the goal of their pūjā, the Supreme Guru.
The three worlds do not know your equal.
O Incomparable One, none can surpass you.

44 I prostrate my body to your glory,
I praṇāma you, O adorable Lord.
I beg forgiveness of you.
Be merciful to me like a father to a son,
A friend to a friend, a lover to a beloved.

45 I have seen your wondrous form
Which no one has seen before,
And my joy brims over,
Yet terror shudders in my heart.
O Refuge of the universe, O God of gods,
Grant me your grace –
Reveal to me your Divine Form!

46 I yearn to see you with diadem, mace and cakra.
O thousand-armed One,
I wish to see you in your four-armed form."

47 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"I am pleased with you, Arjuna.
By the power of my Yoga,
I have revealed to you this dazzling,
Infinite, primal, supreme, cosmic form.
None but you has ever seen this before.

48 O finest of the Kauravas, nothing in the world of men
Will reveal this form of mine –
Neither study of the Vedas, nor yajñas,
Nor gifts, nor rituals, nor the severest tapasyā.
None but you has seen this form before.

49 Forget your anguish and bewilderment,
Forget your fear of my terrifying form!
Be glad of heart and look once again
At the form you wish to see."

[VI:35:50-55]

Transcreated by P. Lal

संजय उवाच

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा
स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं
भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ।५०।

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।
इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ।५१।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।
देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ।५२।

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ।५३।

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ।५४।

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ।५५।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगो नामैकादशोऽध्यायः ॥११॥
ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

50 *Sañjaya said:*
Saying this, Vāsudeva-Krishna graced Arjuna
With a darshan of his peaceful form.
Mahātmā-Krishna pacified fearful Arjuna.

51 *Arjuna said:*
"O Janārdana-Krishna! Seeing your gentle human form,
My peace of mind returns: I am again as I was."

52 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"It is very hard indeed to see
This form of mine which you now see.
Even the gods hunger for such a darshan.

53 Not by the Vedas, not by tapasyā,
Not by charity and not by yajñas
Can I be seen as you have seen me.

54 O scorcher of foes!
By bhakti alone and by nothing else
Can this form of mine be known,
Seen and intimately experienced.

55 Who dedicates all his karma to me,
Who has me as the Supreme Goal,
Who has bhakti for me,
Who is free from attachment,
Who bears no creature any ill-will –
He experiences me, O Pāṇḍava-Arjuna."

This is the eleventh canto titled Viśva-Rūpa-Darśana Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītāwhich provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:36:1-7]

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ द्वादशोऽध्यायः

भक्ति योग

अर्जुन उवाच

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः। १।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः। २।

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम्। ३।

संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः। ४।

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम्।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते। ५।

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते। ६।

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात्।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम्। ७।

Canto 12
Bhakti Yoga
The Yoga of Devotion

1 *Arjuna said:*
"Who are the better yogis –
The ever-steadfast *bhaktas* who worship you
Or those who worship the Imperishable
And Unmanifested Divinity Brahman?"

2 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"According to me, the better yogis are those
Whose minds are ever steadfast
And who worship me with supreme *śraddhā.*

3 But those who worship
The Imperishable, the Indefinable,
The Unmanifested, the Omnipresent,
The Inconceivable, the Unchangeable,
The Immovable, the Always Constant –

4 They subdue their senses,
They are equal-minded to all,
They joyfully seek everyone's welfare –
They also come to me.

5 But those whose minds are set on the Unmanifested –
Their problems are greater, because it is very difficult
For those who have finite bodies
To attain the Infinite Unmanifested.

6 Those who worship me
And surrender all their karma to me,
Who regard me as the Supreme Goal
And devote themselves to me with single-minded yoga –

7 Because their minds are set on me, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
I speedily become their saviour
From the ocean of birth-and-death known as saṁsāra.

[VI:36:8-15]

Transcribed by P. Lal

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः । ८ ।

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनंजय । ९ ।

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ।१०।

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ।११।

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ।१२।

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ।१३।

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ।१४।

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ।१५।

8 Focus your mind only on me,
Devote your *buddhi* to me,
And you will live solely in me
For all time – there is no doubt of this.

9 But if you are unable, O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
To concentrate your mind steadily on me,
Learn at least the importance
Of the repeated practice of Yoga
If you wish to attain me.

10 If repeated practice of Abhyāsa-Yoga is not possible,
Then perform all karma for my sake.
Even this will make you attain perfection.

11 If you cannot do even that, then take shelter in me,
And give up the fruits of your karma.
Learn to discipline yourself.

12 Knowledge is superior to the practice
Of good habit known as Abhyāsa,
Meditation is superior to knowledge,
Renunciation of the fruits of karma
Is superior to meditation.
Peace follows immediately from renunciation.

13 Who hates no one,
Who is friendly and compassionate to all,
Who has shed 'I' and 'mine',
Who has risen above the ego,
Who is serene in sorrow and joy,
Who is patient and forebearing,

14 Who is content, steadfast and self-subdued,
Whose mind and heart are totally dedicated to me –
Such a yogī is my bhakta,
Such a one is dear to me.

15 Who is not upset by the world,
And who does not upset the world,
Who is free from passion, envy, fear and anxiety –
Such a one is dear to me.

[VI:36:16-20]

Transcreated by P. Lal

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः।१६।

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः।१७।

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः।१८।

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित्।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः।१९।

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते।
श्रद्दधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः।२०।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे भक्तियोगो नाम द्वादशोऽध्यायः॥१२॥

16 Who has no selfish expectations,
Who is pure, skilful and efficient,
Who is impartial and free from distractions,
Who takes no credit for any undertakings –
Such a one is my *bhakta*,
Such a one is dear to me.

17 Who neither gloats nor hates,
Who neither grieves nor desires,
Who gives up auspicious and inauspicious,
Who is full of bhakti –
Such a one is dear to me.

18 Who is the same to friend and foe,
Who is the same in honour and dishonour,
Who is the same in pleasure and pain,
Who is the same in heat and cold,
Who is free from attachment,

19 Who is equal-minded in praise and blame,
Who is content with whatever comes,
Who is free from attachment to any dwelling,
Whose mind is stable,
Who is full of bhakti –
Such a man is dear to me.

20 All who follow this nectarine immortal Dharma
Which I have explained to you,
All who with *śraddhā* revere me as the Supreme Goal –
They are my *bhaktas*, my devotees,
And I love them dearly."

This is the twelfth canto titled Bhakti-Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:37:1-7]

Transcreated by P.Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभाग योग

अर्जुन उवाच

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।
एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं मतं मम । १ ।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः । २ ।

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम । ३ ।

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।
स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु । ४ ।

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः । ५ ।

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः । ६ ।

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् । ७ ।

Canto 13
Kṣetra-Kṣetrajña-Vibhāga Yoga
The Field and the Knower of the Field

1 *Arjuna said:*
"O Keśava-Krishna!
What is Prakṛti, and what is Puruṣa?
What is the Field, and who is the Knower of the Field?
What is knowledge, and what should be known?
Please enlighten me."

2 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
This body is the Kṣetra or the Field,
Who knows it is Kṣetrajña, the Knower of the Field.

3 O descendant of Bharata!
Understand that I am the Knower of all Fields.
The only knowledge worth knowing
Is knowledge of the Field and of the Knower of the Field.

4 I will tell you briefly
What the Field is, what its qualities are, and its variations,
What causes produce what effects,
And also who the Knower is
And what are the powers of the Knower.

5 Variously have the ṛṣis sung it, in enchanting songs,
In poems of clarity and power, for the glory of Brahman.

6 The mahā-elements, egoism,
The intellect, the unmanifested primordial matter,
The ten senses, the mind,
The five objects of the senses;

7 Desire, hate, pleasure, pain,
The physical body, consciousness,
Fortitude – this in brief is the Field,
With all its variations.

[VI:37:8-16]

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः । ८ ।

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् । ९ ।

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ।१०।

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ।१२।

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।
अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ।१३।

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ।१४।

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।
असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ।१५।

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ।१६।

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ।१७।

Transcribed by P. Lal

8 Humility, absence of deceit, ahiṁsā,
Forebearance, uprightness, respect for an ācārya,
Purity, steadfastness, self-control;

9 Forsaking of sensual pleasures,
Absence of egoism,
Meditation on the problems
Of birth, death, old age, disease and sorrow;

10 Non-attachment and non-possessiveness
Towards son, wife, home and so on,
And equipoise of mind to everything
Desirable as well as undesirable;

11 Unswerving bhakti for me exclusively through yoga,
Preference for quiet and secluded places,
Discontent with crowds;

12 Constant application to spiritual knowledge,
Having a darshan of the meaning of true knowledge –
All this is knowledge,
What is opposed to this is ignorance.

13 I will describe to you what should be known,
Knowing which brings amṛta-immortality.
This is the birthless Supreme Brahman,
It is described as neither Sat-being nor Asat-non-being.

14 Its hands and feet are everywhere,
Everywhere its eyes, heads, mouths and ears.
It exists, pervading the entire cosmos.

15 Without possessing any senses,
It is radiant with the senses.
Unattached, yet it sustains everything.
Devoid of the guṇas, yet it enjoys all the guṇas.

16 It is inside and outside all creatures,
It is unmoving and also moving,
So subtle that it is incomprehensible,
It is far yet near.

[VI:37:17-24]

Transcreated by Plate

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ।१७।

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ।१८।

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।
मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ।१९।

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि ।
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ।२०।

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।
पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ।२१।

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान् ।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ।२२।

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ।२३।

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ।२४।

17 It is undivisible, yet divided into myriad beings.
It sustains all beings, and consumes them,
And creates them afresh.

18 It is the Light of lights,
Shining beyond darkness,
It is the only Knowledge worth knowing,
It is the Goal of knowledge,
It dwells in the hearts of all.

19 This is the nature of the Field.
This, briefly, is the Knowledge that should be known.
Realising this, my *bhakta* attains me.

20 You should know that Prakṛti and Puruṣa
Are both without any beginning;
You should also know that
All physical variations and guṇas are born of Prakṛti.

21 Prakṛti produces cause and effect,
Puruṣa is said to be the cause
Of the experience of pleasure and pain.

22 Seated in Prakṛti, Puruṣa enjoys the Prakṛti-born
guṇas.
Puruṣa's birth in pure or impure wombs
Is the result of its attachment to the guṇas.

23 This Supreme Puruṣa dwelling in the body
Is said to be the Observer,
The One who permits, the Sustainer, the Enjoyer,
The Great Lord Maheśvara,
And the Supreme Ātman, the Paramātman.

24 Who knows Puruṣa and Prakṛti
Along with the guṇas in this way,
Whatever his life may be at present –
Such a person is not born again.

[VI:37:25-32]

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।
अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ।२५।

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ।२६।

यावत्संजायते किंचित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ।२७।

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ।२८।

समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ।२९।

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।
यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ।३०।

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते तदा ।३१।

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ।३२।

Transcreated by P. Lal

25

Some through meditation see the Ātman
In the ātman by the ātman;
Others do so by Sāṁkhya-knowledge,
And still others by Karma-yoga.

25

Still others who do not know this
Worship by hearsay,
They also transcend death
Because they have faith in what they have heard.

27

O bull-brave Bharata!
Whatever is born, moving or unmoving,
Is born of the union
Of the Field and the Knower of the Field.

28

He who sees this – the Supreme Lord
Existing equally in all beings,
The Undying in the dying –
He alone sees.

29

He who sees the Lord equally
In all beings everywhere,
He does not harm the Ātman by the ātman,
He attains the Supreme Goal.

30

He who sees that all karma
Is performed by Prakṛti alone,
And that the Ātman is not the doer –
He alone sees truly.

31

When one sees in the scattered existences
Of all beings an essential Unity,
And from that Unity
The spreading forth of all beings,
Then one becomes one with Brahman.

32

The Supreme Ātman, the Paramātman,
Is without beginning and without guṇas,
It is imperishable.
Therefore, O son of Kuntī, though it dwells in the body,
It neither acts through the body,
Nor is affected by the deeds of the body.

[VI:37:33-35]

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ।३३।

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ।३४।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ।३५।

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगो नाम त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥१३॥

33 As the all-embracing ākāśa-space
Never gets tainted because of its subtlety,
So the ātman present everywhere in the body
Never gets tainted.

34 O Bharata Arjuna!
Just as a single sun illuminates the entire universe,
The single indwelling ātman illuminates the entire body.

35 Those who see with the insight of wisdom
The distinction between the Kṣetra-body
And Kṣetrajña, the Knower of the body,
And also the mokṣa of Prakṛti's creatures –
They are the ones who attain the Supreme."

This is the thirteenth canto titled Kṣetra-Kṣetrajña-Vibhāga Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as the Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-ṣāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:38:1-7]

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः
गुणत्रयविभाग योग

श्रीभगवानुवाच

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम्।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः। १।

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च। २।

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम्।
संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत। ३।

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता। ४।

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम्। ५।

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम्।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ। ६।

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम्।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम्। ७।

Transcribed by P. Lal

Canto 14
Guṇatraya-Vibhāga Yoga
The Three Yogas

1 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"I will once again give you
The supreme ultimate knowledge,
Knowing which the munis attained
The supreme perfection after this life.

2 Those who take refuge in this knowledge attain my Being.
They are not born when the world begins.
They are not perturbed when the world ends.

3 Mahā-Brahma Prakṛti is my womb
And I place the seed in it;
In this way, O Bharata-Arjuna,
Begins the birth of all life.

4 O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
Whatever the forms of life born in whatever wombs,
Mahā-Brahma Prakṛiti is the womb
And I am the seed-giving Father.

5 O mahā-muscled Arjuna!
Sattva, rajas and tamas are the gunas born of Prakṛti.
They bind the imperishable embodied ātman to the body.

6 Sattva's qualities, O defectless Arjuna,
Are purity, radiance and health.
Sattva binds through happiness and knowledge.

7 O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
The quality of rajas-guṇa is rāga-passion,
Born of craving and attachment.
Rajas binds the embodied ātman
By creating attachment to karma.

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम्।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत। ८।

सत्त्वं सुखे संजयति रजः कर्मणि भारत।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे संजयत्युत। ९।

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत।
रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा।१०।

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते।
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत।११।

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा।
रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ।१२।

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन।१३।

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत्।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते।१४।

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते।
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते।१५।

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम्।
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम्।१६।

8 O descendant of Bharata!
The quality of tamas-guṇa is non-knowledge,
Which deludes all embodied beings.
Tamas binds through negligence, laziness and torpor.

9 O descendant of Bharata!
Sattva relates to happiness,
Rajas relates to physical activity,
And tamas, obscuring knowledge,
Relates to carelessness and negligence.

10 O descendant of Bharata!
Sattva occasionally predominates over rajas and tamas,
Rajas over sattva and tamas,
And tamas over sattva and rajas.

11 When the light of wisdom suffuses every pore of the body,
Then you should realise that sattva is predominant.

12 O bull-brave Bharata!
When greed, excessive activity,
Restlessness and ambition are present,
Then rajas is predominant.

13 O delighter of the Kauravas!
Lack of inner light, lack of progress,
Neglect and delusion –
These indicate the predominance of tamas.

14 If a person dies when sattva is predominant,
He attains the pure and perfect realms
Of those who are supremely wise.

15 Death in rajas means birth among the karma-obsessed.
Death in tamas means birth in the wombs of the foolish.

16 The fruit of good karma is sāttvika and pure,
The fruit of rajas is pain,
The fruit of tamas is ignorance.

[VI:38:17-24]

सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ।१७।

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ।१८।

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ।१९।

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ।२०।

अर्जुन उवाच

कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ।२१।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ।२२।

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ।२३।

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ।२४।

Transcreated by P. Lal

17 From sattva comes wisdom,
From rajas comes greed,
From tamas come negligence, delusion and ignorance.

18 The sāttvika go up,
The rājasika hang in mid-space,
The tāmasika, of the lowest guṇa,
Go down.

19 Who sees no other worker but the guṇas,
And also realises what is beyond the guṇas,
He attains me.

20 The embodied ātman transcends the body
Which evolves from the three guṇas,
And free from birth, death, old age and sorrow,
It experiences the nectar of eternal immortality."

21 *Arjuna said:*
"How does one recognise
The transcender of the three guṇas?
How does he behave, Prabhu-Lord,
How does he transcend the three guṇas?"

22 *Śrī Bhagavan Krishna said:*
"O Pāṇḍava-Arjuna!
Such a person does not dislike
Sattva-light, rajas-activity and tamas-delusion
When they are present,
And does not long for them when they are not present.

23 He remains as if unconcerned,
The guṇas do not disturb him,
He knows that only the guṇas are working,
He is stable and serene.

24 He is serene in joy and sorrow,
He is relaxed and self-dependent,
A lump of earth, a stone, gold are the same to him,
He keeps his balance in pleasant and unpleasant times,
He is patient, and calm in praise and blame.

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ।२५।

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।
स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ।२६।

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ।२७।

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे गुणत्रयविभागयोगो नाम चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥१४॥

25 Serene in honour and dishonour,
Alike to friend and foe,
Never taking credit for his endeavours –
Such a person is said
To have transcended the guṇas.

26 Who serves me with unswerving bhakti-yoga –
He is the one who transcends the guṇas,
He is the one fit for attaining Brahman.

27 For I am the abode of Brahman,
The Imperishable and Immutable,
The abode of Eternal Immortality,
Of Everlasting Dharma, and of Absolute Bliss."

This is the fourteenth canto titled Guṇatraya-Vibhāga Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as The Bhagavad-Gitā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:39:1-6]

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः

पुरुषोत्तम योग

श्रीभगवानुवाच

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम्।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित्। १।

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा
गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः।
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि
कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके। २।

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूल-
मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा। ३।

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं
यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी। ४।

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः।
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-
र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत्। ५।

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम। ६।

[VI:39:1-6]

Canto 15

Purușottama Yoga

The Supreme Purușa

1 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"They say there is an eternal aśvattha tree
Whose roots are above, whose branches are below,
And whose leaves are the Vedas.
The person who knows this tree
Is the person who knows the Vedas.

2 Its branches spread above and below,
And are nourished by the guṇas.
Its flowers are sense-pleasures.
Below the tree, in the world of mankind,
Are still more roots, which bind human beings to karma.

3 Its real form cannot be seen,
Nor its end, beginning, and presence.
Slice this firm-rooted aśvattha
With the sharp sword of non-attachment!

4 In this way one should seek that state
From which there is no return to this world.
Then one should say: I seek shelter
In that Eternal Ancient Purușa
From whom flows the unending cycle of birth and rebirth.

5 Free from pride and delusion,
Having conquered the defect of attachment,
Always devoted to the Supreme Ātman,
All the passions of kāma controlled,
Free from pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain –
The undeluded person attains the Imperishable Supreme State.

6 The sun does not illumine it,
Nor the moon, nor fire;
This is my Supreme Abode,
After attaining which one never returns.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति । ७ ।

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् । ८ ।

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते । ९ ।

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ।१०।

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ।११।

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।
यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ।१२।

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।
पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ।१३।

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ।१४।

7 An eternal fragment of myself becomes
An embodied *jīva* in the mortal world,
And attracts the Prakṛti-bound mind
And the five senses to itself.

8 When the Divine Lord Īśvara takes a body
And when he leaves it,
He takes the mind and the senses,
Like the wind absorbing the fragrance of flowers.

9 Abiding in the ear, eye, touch, taste, smell, and mind,
He experiences the objects of the senses.

10 The foolish do not see him
Abiding in the body or transmigrating,
Or enjoying the pleasures of the guṇas,
But those who have eyes of wisdom see this clearly.

11 Persevering yogis see this Divinity
Dwelling in their ātman,
But those with unpurified ātman, and the unintelligent,
Even when persevering, fail to see Him.

12 The radiance in the sun
Which illumines the whole world,
The radiance in the moon and in fire –
These radiances are mine.

13 I suffuse the earth with my energy
And sustain all life;
Becoming the moon, full of life-giving rasa,
I nourish all vegetation.

14 And living in the body as the vital fire,
United with *prāṇa* and *apāṇa* life-breaths,
I digest the four kinds of food
(Chewing, sucking, licking, swallowing).

[VI:39:15-20]

Transcreated by P.Lal

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो
मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ।१५।

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ।१६।

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहतः ।
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ।१७।

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च पथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ।१८।

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ।१९।

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ।२०।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे पुरुषोत्तमयोगो नाम पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः ॥१५॥

15 I live in all hearts,
Memory and knowledge proceed from me
As well as loss of memory and knowledge.
I am what the Vedas want to know,
I am the Creator of the Vedānta philosophy,
And I am the Knower of the Vedas.

16 Two kinds of Puruṣas exist in the world –
The perishable and the imperishable.
Bodies are the perishable,
The unmanifested Self is the imperishable.

17 But there is another – the Supreme Puruṣa,
The Transcendent Soul, the Param-Ātman,
The Deathless Lord,
Who pervades and sustains the three worlds.

18 I transcend the perishable and the imperishable,
Which is why the world and the Vedas
Adore me as the Supreme Puruṣa,
Puruṣottama.

19 O Bharata-Arjuna!
The man who knows me
As the Supreme Puruṣa, Puruṣottama,
He becomes free from delusion,
He adores me with all his mind and heart.

20 O defectless one! Bharata-Arjuna!
I give you this most profound secret śāstra.
Knowing this you will become wise,
And you will accomplish all duties that need to be done."

This is the fifteenth canto titled Puruṣottama Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as The Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:40:1-6]

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ षोडशोऽध्यायः

दैवासुरसम्पद्विभाग योग

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् । १ ।

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् । २ ।

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत । ३ ।

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ संपदमासुरीम् । ४ ।

दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।
मा शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव । ५ ।

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च ।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु । ६ ।

Canto 16

Daiva-Asura-Sampad-Vibhāga Yoga

Divine and Anti-Divine Natures

1 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Fearlessness, a pure heart,
Steadfastness in the yoga of knowledge,
Charity, control of the senses, sacrifice,
Study of the scriptures, tapasyā, and integrity;

2 Ahiṁsā, truth, absence of anger, renunciation,
tranquillity,
Avoiding fault-finding, compassion,
Lack of greed, gentleness, modesty,
Abstaining from fickleness and frivolity;

3 Vigour, forebearance, patience, purity,
Absence of hatred and of self-importance –
These are the signs of the divine nature,
O Bharata-Arjuna.

4 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
Showing off, pride, self-importance,
Anger, harshness, and ignorance
Are the signs of those who are born
With an anti-divine nature.

5 Divine birth leads to mokṣa,
And anti-divine to bondage.
Do not grieve, son of Pāṇḍu,
Your birth is divine.

6 Two kinds of people inhabit this earth –
The divine and the anti-divine.
I have described the divine in detail;
Now, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
I will explain the anti-divine.

Transcreated by P. Lal

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते। ७।

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम्।
अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम्। ८।

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः। ९।

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिव्रताः ।१०।

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः।
कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः।११।

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः।
ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान्।१२।

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम्।
इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम्।१३।

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि।
ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी।१४।

7 The anti-divine do not know
What should be done
And what should not be done.
They have neither purity,
Nor good conduct, nor truth.

8 These people say:
'This universe has no truth,
No foundation, no Īśvara;
It is produced by sexual intercourse,
Its origin is sheer lust, nothing else.'

9 With these beliefs, these petty-minded people
With ruined ātmans, do horrible deeds,
And become the world's enemies and its destroyers.

10 Hypocritical, vain and proud,
Filled with insatiable lust,
They let their delusion breed evil thoughts,
And act accordingly.

11 Tormented by endless worries
Which end only with death,
They consider the pleasures of kāma
As the all-in-all of life.

12 They are trapped in hundreds of expectations,
They are victims of lust and anger,
They struggle to amass wealth dishonestly
In order to indulge in sensual pleasures.

13 'Today I got this, tomorrow I'll enjoy that.
This wealth I have,
And I shall get more wealth later.

14 I killed this enemy today,
Tomorrow I'll get rid of others.
I am Lord Īśvara himself,
I enjoy, I succeed, I am strong, I am happy.

आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ।१५।

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ।१६।

आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।
यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ।१७।

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ।१८।

तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।
क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ।१९।

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ।२०।

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ।२१।

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।
आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ।२२।

15 I am rich, I am high-born,
There is none like me.
I sacrifice, I give, I rejoice.'
Deluded by such ignorance,

16 Bewildered by these beliefs,
Trapped in the net of folly,
Addicted to sensual pleasures,
They fall into a foul hell.

17 Puffed with self-importance, obstinate,
Glorying in the pride and intoxication of wealth,
Ostentatiously performing sacrifices only in name,
Disregarding all the ordained norms;

18 Filled with *ahaṁkāra* self-importance, brute force,
Insolence, lust and anger,
These envious people hate me
In themselves and in others.

19 In this worldly cycle of birth and death,
I again and again cast
These malicious, cruel, evil scoundrels
Into the wombs of the anti-divine.

20 Born from anti-divine yonis,
Deluded birth after birth, O Kaunteya-Arjuna,
These fools fail to attain me,
And become even worse in their next birth.

21 Hell has three gates:
Kāma-lust, anger and greed.
They ruin the ātman.
Therefore, give up these three.

22 O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
The man who has crossed
These three gates of darkness
Does what is best for his ātman
And achieves the Supreme Goal.

[VI:40:23-24]

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ।२३।

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ।२४।

Transcreated by P. Lal

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे दैवासुरसंपद्विभागयोगो नाम षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥१६॥

23 But the man who sets aside the rules of the śāstras,
And works under the influence of kāma-lust –
Such a man never attains perfection.
There is no happiness for him, no Supreme Goal.

24 So let the śāstras guide you
On what should be done
And what should not be done.
You should act only after careful study
Of what is ordained in the śāstras."

This is the sixteenth canto titled Daiva-Asura Sampad-Vibhāga Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as The Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:41:1-7]

Transcribed by P. Lal

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ सप्तदशोऽध्यायः

श्रद्धात्रयविभाग योग

अर्जुन उवाच

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः । १ ।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु । २ ।

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः । ३ ।

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः । ४ ।

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।
दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः । ५ ।

कर्शयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।
मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान् । ६ ।

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु । ७ ।

Canto 17
Śraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga Yoga
The Three Forms of Śraddhā-Faith

1 *Arjuna said:*
"Krishna, enlighten me:
What is the condition of those
Who worship with *śraddhā*
But disregard the śāstras –
Is it sāttva, rajas or tamas?"

2 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"Let me explain it to you.
The *śraddhā* of the embodied ātman
Is threefold by its very nature –
Sāttvika, rājasika and tāmasika.

3 O descendant of Bharata!
Each person's nature determines the quality
Of that person's *śraddhā.*
Truly, a person is what his *śraddhā* is.

4 The sāttvika worship the gods,
The rājasika worship the yakṣas and rākṣasas,
And the others – the tāmasika –
Worship ghosts and the spirits of the dead.

5 The men who perform fearful tapasyā
Which is not ordained in the śāstras,
Filled with self-importance and ego,
Bloated with lust, anger and power –

6 These foolish anti-god types torture their bodies
And torture me too – the dweller-in-the-body.

7 The food that people prefer is of three kinds,
And so are yajña, tapasyā and charity.
Let me explain the distinction between them.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्य-
सुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या
आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः । ८ ।

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः । ९ ।

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ।१०।

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ।११।

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ।१२।

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ।१३।

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ।१४।

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ।१५।

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ।१६।

8 The sāttvika prefers food that promotes
Longevity, vitality, strength, health,
Happiness and satisfaction –
Tasty, bland, substantial and pleasing.

9 The rājasika prefers food that is bitter, sour, salty,
Excessively hot, pungent, dry and burning,
Food which produces pain, sorrow and disease.

10 The tāmasika prefers food which is
Half-cooked, tasteless, smelly, stale,
Defiled by the touch of unclean and impure hands.

11 Sāttvika yajña is performed
Selflessly, dutifully, for its own sake
And not for any reward.

12 O descendant of Bharata!
Rājasika yajña is performed ostentatiously,
For the sake of reward and success.

13 Tāmasika yajña is performed
Without mantra, without *śraddhā-faith*
Without food-offerings, without *dakṣiṇā*-gifts
And without respect for tradition.

14 Tapasyā of the body means reverence
For gods, the twice-born, gurus and elders,
As well as the wise; it involves
Purity, integrity, brahmacarya and ahiṁsā.

15 Tapasyā of speech means
Speaking only truth that gives no offence,
And which is pleasant and beneficial;
It involves regular study and repetition
Of the Vedas and other sacred texts.

16 Tapasyā of the mind means serenity,
Gentleness, silence, self-control,
And purity of intention.

[VI:41:17-23]

Transcreated by P.Lal

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते।१७।

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत्।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम्।१८।

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्।१९।

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम्।२०।

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम्।२१।

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते।
असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्।२२।

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः।
ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा।२३।

17 This threefold tapasyā practised
With deep *śraddhā* by steadfast people
Who desire no fruits for their actions
Is known as sāttvika.

18 The tapasyā practised to obtain
Respect, honour, pūjā and wealth,
And performed with ostentation,
Is said to be rājasika –
It is transient and unstable.

19 The tapasyā that is practised with foolish obstinacy,
Torturing oneself and ruining others
Is said to be tāmasika.

20 Always keep in mind:
Sāttvika charity is
Giving for the sake of giving,
Giving without expecting return,
Giving at the right place,
At the right time, to the right person.

21 Always keep in mind:
Rājasika charity is
Reluctant giving,
Giving that expects return,
Giving that expects gain.

22 Tāmasika charity is:
Giving at the wrong place and the wrong time,
Giving to an unworthy person,
Giving without feeling,
In fact with contempt.

23 Always keep in mind:
Auṁ Tat Sat –
These three symbols of Brahman.
From the ancient past
The Brāhmaṇa scriptures, the Vedas,
And the yajñas have proceeded from this.

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः।
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम्।२४।

तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः।२५।

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते।
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते।२६।

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते।२७।

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत्।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह।२८।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगो नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥१७॥

24 Therefore the knower of Brahman
Chants Auṁ when performing yajña,
When offering charity, and practising tapasyā,
As advised by tradition.

25 If you seek mokṣa, chant Tat
When performing yajña, tapasyā and charity –
Without expecting any fruits.

26 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
The word Sat is used to signify
Truth and Goodness,
And also for any praiseworthy karma.

27 Steadfastness in yajña, tapasyā and charity
Is Sat.
And all action thus performed is also Sat.

28 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
Whatever is sacrificed or given in charity,
Whatever action is performed,
Whatever tapasyā is practised
– If done without *śraddhā* –
This is called Asat, useless –
Useless in this world and in the next."

This is the seventeenth canto titled Śraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as The Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

[VI:42:1-8]

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथाष्टादशोऽध्यायः
मोक्षसंन्यास योग

अर्जुन उवाच

संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम्।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन। १।

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः। २।

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः।
यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे। ३।

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम।
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः। ४।

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम्। ५।

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम्। ६।

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते।
मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः। ७।

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत्।
स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत्। ८।

Transcreated by P. Lal

Canto 18

Mokṣa Yoga

The Way of Mokṣa and Saṁnyāsa

1 *Arjuna said:*
"O maha-muscled slayer of Keśini,
Tell me the truth about *saṁnyāsa* and *tyāga*.
O Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna, what is the difference?"

2 *Śrī Bhagavān Krishna said:*
"The enlightened say that *saṁnyāsa*
Is renunciation of desire-laden actions,
And the discerning declare that *tyāga*
Is giving-up of the fruits of all actions.

3 Some intelligent thinkers say
All actions are defective and should be given up;
Others however say
Yajña, charity and tapasyā should not be given up.

4 O finest of the Bharatas!
Listen to my final word on giving up.
O tiger-among-men!
Giving up is said to be of three kinds.

5 Yajña, charity and tapasyā
Should never be given up –
They should always be performed.
Yajña, charity and tapasyā purify their wise performer.

6 But attachment to their fruits, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
Must always be given up.
This is my supreme and absolute conviction.

7 Karma as discipline should never be renounced.
Only the ignorant tāmasika types
Give up such karma.

8 Nor should fear of pain and injury
Be reason to give up such karma.
The rājasika do this.
Such renunciation is utterly fruitless.

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते।
हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते।१७।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः।१८।

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः।
प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि।१९।

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम्।२०।

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान्।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम्।२१।

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम्।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्।२२।

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम्।
अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते।२३।

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम्।२४।

9 O Arjuna!
Karma as discipline should be performed
Because it should be performed,
Without attachment or hope of reward,
Such action is sāttvika, Arjuna.

10 The wise sāttvika renouncer
Whose doubts have been dispelled,
Neither likes pleasant work
Nor dislikes unpleasant work.

11 Act one must – the body compels it –
True giving up is renunciation of fruits.

12 Karma brings either pleasant, unpleasant,
Or mixed fruits after death.
The true renouncer escapes them,
The reward-seeker does not.

13 O mahā-muscled Arjuna!
Learn from me the wisdom of Sāṁkhya philosophy.
All karma is the result of five causes:

14 The place of action which is the body,
The agent who is the doer of action,
The different senses,
The various kinds of effort,
And fifth, the divine factor.

15 Whatever action is performed by a person
Through body, speech and mind –
Whether right or wrong –
These five are its causes.

16 That being so, the perverse person
With impure understanding,
Who sees the ātman as the doer –
He does not see the truth at all.

[VI:42:17-24]

Transcreated by P. Lal

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते।
हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते।१७।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः।१८।

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः।
प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि।१९।

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम्।२०।

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान्।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम्।२१।

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम्।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्।२२।

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम्।
अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते।२३।

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम्।२४।

17 But the person who transcends his ego,
Whose intellect does not cling to his ego –
Even if he devastates all these people,
He does not really destroy them,
Nor is he trapped by his deed.

18 Knowledge, known, and the knower
Are the three causes of action.
The senses, the deed, and the doer
Are the three bases of action.

19 On the basis of the guṇas,
Sāṁkhya philosophy declares
That knowledge, deed and doer
Are also of three kinds.
Listen to me about these.

20 Knowledge that sees
The Imperishable One in the many,
The Indivisible in the divided –
That knowledge is sāttvika.

21 Knowledge that sees
Difference everywhere,
Everywhere variety and multiplicity –
That knowledge is rājasika.

22 Knowledge that sees only fragmented aspects
But considers them as the totality,
Knowledge which is not based on reason,
Without regard for truth, and which is trivial –
That knowledge is tāmasika.

23 Deed performed without attachment,
Without like or dislike,
Without expectation for its fruits –
That deed is sāttvika.

24 Deed performed with selfish desire,
With ego and excessive effort –
That deed is rājasika.

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनवेक्ष्य च पौरुषम्।
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते।२५।

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते।२६।

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः।
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः।२७।

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः।
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते।२८।

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनंजय।२९।

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये।
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी।३०।

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च।
अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी।३१।

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता।
सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी।३२।

25 Deed done through delusion,
Without regard for consequences,
Leading to loss to oneself, and injury to others –
That deed is tāmasika.

26 The doer free from attachment,
Unegoistic, patient, joyfully persevering,
Serene in success or failure –
Such a doer is sāttvika.

27 The doer who is passionate,
Desiring the fruits of action, greedy, envious of others,
Impure, smeared by joy and sorrow –
Such a doer is rājasika.

28 The doer who is unsteady, uncultured,
Arrogant, dishonest, malicious,
Lazy, dejected, endlessly procrastinating –
Such a doer is tāmasika.

29 O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Listen to me while I explain,
Comprehensively and specifically,
The three kinds of intellect,
And the three kinds of fortitude.

30 The intellect that knows the difference
Between spiritual progress and regress,
Between right and wrong action,
Between fear and fearlessness,
Between bondage and mokṣa –
Is sāttvika, O Pārtha-Arjuna.

31 The intellect that sees in a muddled way
The difference between dharma and adharma,
Between right and wrong action –
Is rājasika, O Pārtha-Arjuna.

32 The ignorance-clouded intellect which sees
Adharma as dharma
And interprets everything perversely –
Is tāmasika, O Pārtha-Arjuna.

[VI:42:33-40]

Transcreated by P.Lal

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ।३३।

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ।३४।

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।
न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ।३५।

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ।३६।

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ।३७।

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ।३८।

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ।३९।

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ।४०।

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप।
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ।४१।

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ।४२।

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम्।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ।४३।

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम्।
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ।४४।

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ।४५।

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ।४६।

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ।४७।

41 O foe-destroying Arjuna!
The activities of Brahmins,
Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras
Are divided according to the nature of each
Which is born of the three guṇas.

42 The very nature of a Brahmin's karma
Involves the following:
Serenity, self-control, tapasyā,
Tolerance, honesty, knowledge,
Discernment, and faith in divinity.

43 The very nature of a Kṣatriya's karma
Involves the following:
Valour, boldness, courage, ingenuity,
Not fleeing from battle,
Generosity, and authority.

44 The very nature of a Vaiśya's karma
Involves the following:
Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade.
The very nature of a Śūdra's karma
Involves service.

45 Each happily performing karma conscientiously,
Each attains the highest perfection.
How such perfection is attained
By happy performance of one's karma,
Let me explain.

46 A person attains perfection
By adoring through his karma
The Divinity from whom has evolved
This entire universe.

47 Better one's own dharma, however imperfect,
Than the dharma of another, however perfect.
There is never any error
When your conscience guides your karma.

[VI:42:48-55]

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ।४८।

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ।४९।

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ।५०।

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।
शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ।५१।

विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।
ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ।५२।

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ।५३।

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ।५४।

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ।५५।

48 O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
One should never give up the karma one is born with,
No matter how defective it is.
All work has defects, as all fire has smoke.

49 Detachment, discipline, desirelessness, dedication –
These bring true freedom from karma,
And such freedom leads to perfection.

50 O Kaunteya-Arjuna!
Let me explain to you briefly
How to attain the perfection of Brahman,
Which is the supreme consummation of knowledge.

51 When the mind is pure and the intellect subdued,
When sound and other senses, and like and dislike
No longer unsettle a person;

52 A lonely spot is sought, little is eaten,
Speech, body and mind are disciplined,
The yoga of meditation practised regularly,
And freedom from passionate longings cultivated;

53 Ego, power, pride, kāma, anger, material possessions,
And the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' are given up –
Then peace is attained.
These are the preconditions
Of becoming one with Brahman.

54 Having become one with Brahman,
There is no more grief, no more desire,
There is only serenity
And supreme bhakti for me.

55 Then does he truly know my nature,
Who I am and what I am.
Through bhakti he knows me,
And becomes one with me.

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम्॥५६॥

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव॥५७॥

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि।
अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि॥५८॥

यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति॥५९॥

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत्॥६०॥

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया॥६१॥

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम्॥६२॥

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु॥६३॥

56 He takes shelter in me
And performs his karma freely.
By my grace he attains
The eternal, imperishable state.

57 Mentally surrender all your karma to me,
And regard me as the Supreme Goal.
With the help of Buddhi-Yoga
Focus your mind always on me.

58 With your mind fixed on me,
You will by my grace overcome all obstacles.
But if your ego prevents you from listening to me,
Then you are doomed.

59 If, swollen with ego,
You say, 'I will not fight',
Your resolve is in vain –
Your nature will make you fight.

60 Your karma born of your nature
Will make you fight, O Kaunteya-Arjuna.
You are foolish not to fight.
You will fight in spite of yourself.

61 O Arjuna! The Lord Īśvara
Dwells in the hearts of all creatures.
Through his māyā, the creatures of the world
Revolve as if whirling in a magic wheel.

62 O Bharata descendant!
With all your heart take shelter in him.
Through his grace you will attain
Supreme peace and the eternal state.

63 I give you this profound wisdom,
The secret of all secrets.
Think it over very carefully.
You are free to choose.

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ।६४।

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ।६५।

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ।६६।

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ।६७।

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ।६८।

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ।६९।

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ।७०।

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।७१।

64 Listen again to this supreme wisdom,
The profoundest of all secrets.
I speak for your good,
Because you are very dear to me.

65 Think only of me. Be my *bhakta.*
Worship me. Namaskāra me.
You will certainly attain me.
I promise you this because I love you.

66 Discard all your dharmas.
Take refuge only in me.
Do not fear –
I will free you from all imperfections.

67 And never repeat this wisdom
To anyone who does not practise tapasyā,
Or who is without bhakti, who refuses to listen,
Or who speaks slightingly of me.

68 Anyone who with bhakti
Teaches this supreme secret wisdom
To my faithful devotees
Will surely attain me.

69 What more loving service to me
Can there be than this?
There is no one I love more on earth
Than such a person.

70 Anyone who studies
This dialogue of dharma between us
Worships me with the yajña of knowledge.
This is my conviction.

71 Any person who listens to this wisdom
With *śraddhā* and without envy
Achieves liberation.
He attains the radiant worlds
Of those who perform good karma.

[VI:42:72-78]

Transcreated by P. Lal

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनंजय ।७२।

अर्जुन उवाच

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ।७३।

संजय उवाच

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।
संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ।७४।

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यमहं परम् ।
योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ।७५।

राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ।७६।

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।
विस्मयो मे महान्राजन्हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ।७७।

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ।७८।

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे मोक्षसंन्यासयोगो नामाष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥ १८ ॥

72 "Have you listened attentively, Arjuna?
Is your ignorance gone, Pārtha?
Is your delusion dispelled, Dhanañjaya?"

73 *Arjuna said:*
"No, no doubts, Acyuta-Krishna.
My delusion is dispelled, through your grace.
And I have regained my memory.
I am now firm. I will do as you say."

74 *Sañjaya said:*
I heard this wonderful dialogue between
Vāsudeva-Krishna and mahātmā Pārtha-Arjuna,
And my hair stood on end.

75 By the grace of Vyāsa did I hear
This supreme, profound, secret wisdom, this Yoga,
Straight from the lips of Yogeśvara-Krishna himself.

76 O rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra!
Every time I recall this wonderful sacred dialogue
Between Keśava-Krishna and Arjuna,
Joy suffuses me again and again.

77 O rājā! Every time I recall
The marvellous Revelation of Hari-Krishna,
I am wonderstruck,
I rejoice again and again.

78 Where Yogeśvara-Krishna is,
Where brilliant-bowman Pārtha-Arjuna is –
Are prosperity, victory, glory, and perfect justice.
I am convinced of this.

This is the eighteenth canto titled Mokṣa Yoga, in the Upaniṣad known as The Bhagavad-Gītā which provides Brahman-wisdom, which is a Yoga-śāstra in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Krishna and Arjuna.

9 The gods, gandharvas, *pitṛs,*
the Siddhas and Cāraṇas –
all arrived up on the battlefield
to witness the spectacle.

10 And mahā-fortune-favoured ṛṣis,
led by Śatakratu-Indra of a hundred sacrifices,
also turned up in a large body
to witness the mahā-carnage.

11 O king! Brave Yudhiṣṭhira,
seeing the two armies, poised for war,
surging forward like a massive
continually heaving ocean,

12 Took off his war-armour
and laid aside his fine weapons.
Alighting from his chariot,
hands folded in *añjali,*

13 Dharmārāja Yudhiṣṭhira faced his enemy,
looking eastward
in the direction of his grandfather,
and remaining silent.

14 Seeing him, Kuntī's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
also alighted
from his chariot and, with his brothers,
followed him.

15 *Bhagavān* Vāsudeva-Krishna followed them.
The chief rājās
were disturbed, but they also anxiously
followed him.

16 Arjuna said: "Rājā, what are you doing –
leaving us,
and proceeding on foot eastwards
to face our enemy?"

17 Bhīma said: "O Indra-among-rājās,
where are you going, O earth-lord,
leaving your armour, abandoning your brothers
and going to your enemy?"

18 Nakula said: "You are my eldest brother –
I am afraid, O Bharata,
seeing you behave in this manner.
Where are you going?"

19 Sahadeva said: "King, these hostile forces
are ranged against us –
countless troops, mahā-fearful and aggressive;
leaving us, you go to them. Why?"

20 Though all his brothers cautioned him
(continued Sañjaya),
Kaurava-delighting Yudhiṣṭhira kept walking,
without saying a single word.

21 Mahā-wise and mahā-minded Vāsudeva-Krishna
merely smiled and turning,
he said to the Pāṇḍava brothers,
"I know why.

22 Before fighting with his enemies,
he wishes to pay his respects
to all his gurus – Bhīṣma and Droṇa,
Gautama-Kṛpa and Śalya.

23 It is said that, in the past,
anyone fighting a battle
without first honouring his gurus
immediately fell in estimation.

24 It is my conviction that anyone who honours
those who deserve respect –
as laid down in the śāstras –
is bound to succeed in the war."

25 Even as Krishna was saying this,
the soldiers of Duryodhana
kept staring at Yudhiṣṭhira walking towards them.
A great commotion arose –
some sighing "Hai! Hai!"
and others keeping silent.

26 Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira, the soldiers of Duryodhana
whispered to themselves:
"This man must surely be a blot
upon his family.

27 It's obvious that rājā Yudhiṣṭhira is afraid
of Bhīṣma:
he and his brothers come to seek
Bhīṣma's mercy.

28 But why is he afraid? – he has Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma,
and Nakula and Sahadeva on his side
to help him.

29 Impossible that he was born a Kṣatriya!
It is clear
that he is not brave at all;
he's afraid of the battle."

30 The soldiers praised the strength
of the Kauravas, and,
in great joy, began flapping and waving
their uniforms.

31 O lord of the earth! The soldiers on the other side
started criticising Yudhiṣṭhira
and his brothers for their action –
they criticised Keśava-Krishna also.

32 They mocked Yudhiṣṭhira: "*Dhik*! Shame on you!"
O lord of the earth,
all the soldiers of the Kauravas
fell silent.

33 *What will the rājā say?*
What will Bhīṣma reply?
What will prowess-proud Bhīma say?
And Krishna and Arjuna?

34 O rājā! Mahā-suspense gripped the soldiers
of the two armies.
And what will be the final reply
of Yudhiṣṭhira?

35 Followed by his brothers, Yudhiṣṭhira walked
through hostile ranks
of arrows and darts,
and went straight to Bhīṣma.

[VI:43:36-44]

Transcreated by P.Lal

36 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Pāṇḍu,
touched with both hands
the feet of Bhīṣma, son of Śāntanu,
and said:

37 "Impossible-to-vanquish one!
I have a favour to ask.
We wish to fight with you.
Tāta! Dear one! Bless us."

38 Bhīṣma replied: "Ruler of earth, mahārāja,
O Bharata descendant,
if you had not come I would have cursed you
into defeat.

39 My son, I am pleased with you.
Fight, son of Pāṇḍu, and win!
May this war grant you
all your desires.

40 Mahārāja, ask a boon. What do you,
son of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
want from me? It is possible that defeat
might not touch you.

41 Mahārāja, a man is the slave of need,
but need is no one's slave.
This is true. I am tied to the Kauravas
by need.

42 That is why I say all this to you,
like a eunuch;
I am a servant. Except my changing sides,
what do you wish?"

43 "O mahā-muscled one," said Yudhiṣṭhira,
"all I ask is:
fight for the Kauravas, but, every day,
think of me too."

44 Bhīṣma replied: "Fight I will,
and on the side of your enemies.
But tell me, Kaurava rājā,
what can I do for you?"

45 Yudhiṣṭhira said: "How can I defeat you
who are invincible?
If you wish my welfare, if it pleases you,
tell me this."

46 Bhīṣma replied: "Son of Kuntī,
I know of no one –
not even Śatakratu-Indra – who can defeat me
on the battlefield."

47 Yudhiṣṭhira said: "Pitāmaha! *Namo'astu te!*
I namaskāra you. And I ask:
Tell me how your enemy can kill you
on the battlefield."

48 Bhīṣma replied: "*Tāta*! My child!
I do not see any man who can defeat me.
The time of my death has not yet come.
Come to me later."

49 Yudhiṣṭhira bowed his head (continued Sanjaya)
in acknowledgement
and paid his homage to Bhīṣma
by accepting his words.

50 Accompanied by his brothers,
the mahā-muscled hero Yudhiṣṭhira
walked through the ranks of staring soldiers
to meet ācārya Droṇa.

51 Honouring Droṇa, he did *pradakṣiṇa*;
then rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
said these words of self-benefit
to the invincible hero:

52 "Advise me, *bhagavan*, how I can fight
without incurring demerit.
O twice-born one! With your permission,
how can I defeat all my enemies?"

53 Droṇa replied: "Mahārāja, if, bent on war,
you had failed to seek my advice,
I would have cursed you
into defeat.

54 Defectless Yudhiṣṭhira, you have pleased me,
you have offered me pūjā-respect.
You have my permission.
Fight! And may you win.

55 Tell me whatever you have in mind.
I will grant it.
Except my changing sides, tell me, mahārāja,
your deepest desire.

56 Mahārāja, a man is the slave of need,
but need is no one's slave.
This is true. I am tied to the Kauravas
by need.

57 And so I say this like a eunuch –
'Except my changing sides,
what do you want?' I fight for the Kauravas,
but I want your victory."

58 Yudhiṣṭhira replied: "O Brahmin,
fight for the Kauravas and desire my victory.
Tell me what is good for me.
That is all I ask."

59 Droṇa said: "Hari-Krishna is on your side,
you will surely win.
O rājā, it is my hope that you defeat your foes
in this battle.

60 Where dharma is, Krishna is;
where Krishna is, victory is.
Son of Kuntī, go and fight!
Tell me, what else?"

61 "Finest of Brahmins," said Yudhiṣṭhira,
"listen to me:
How is it possible for us to defeat you
who are invincible?"

62 "So long as I fight, you cannot win,"
replied Droṇa.
"Therefore, rājā, try to kill me soon,
with help from your brothers."

63 "O mahā-muscled ācārya," asked Yudhiṣṭhira,
"by what means can we kill you?
I touch your feet and ask you.
Namo'astu te."

64 Droṇa said: "I do not see anyone, *tāta*, my child,
who can kill me
when, angered, and scattering arrows,
I fight in battle.

65 The truth is: No one can kill me
unless I voluntarily, O rājā,
lay down my weapons, withdraw from battle,
and prepare to die.

66 And it is true that I will lay down
my weapons
if I hear something mahā-disagreeable
from someone trustworthy."

67 Mahārāja (continued Sañjaya),
after honouring Bharadvāja's son Droṇa,
Yudhiṣṭhira went to the son of Śaradvat,
ācārya Kṛpa.

68 Bowing to Kṛpa and doing *pradakṣiṇa,*
fluent-in-speech rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
said these words
to that invincible hero:

69 "Guru, give me permission to fight
without incurring demerit.
Defectless one, I will defeat my enemy
if you give permission."

70 Kṛpa replied: "Mahārāja, if, bent on war,
you had failed
to seek my advice, I would have cursed you
into defeat.

71 Mahārāja, a man is the slave of need,
but need is no one's slave.
This is true. I am tied to the Kauravas
by need.

72 Mahārāja, I must fight on their side.
Even if I say,
'Except my changing sides, ask anything,'
I speak like a eunuch."

73 Yudhiṣṭhira said: "That is exactly, ācārya,
why I ask. Listen to me."
But rājā Yudhiṣṭhira was so upset
he could not speak.

74 Gautama-Kṛpa guessed what Yudhiṣṭhira wanted
(continued Sañjaya).
O earth-lord! He said: "I cannot be killed.
Fight! And may you win.

75 Your coming here has pleased me.
Each morning, as I rise, O lord of men,
I will pray that you win.
It is the truth that I speak."

76 Mahārāja! Lord of the earth!
Hearing Kṛpa say these words,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira honoured him
and went to the Madra-rājā.

77 Bowing to Śalya and doing *pradakṣiṇa,*
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
said to him these words
motivated by self-benefit:

78 "Invincible hero, no demerit will accrue
if I fight, O rājā,
with your permission. I will defeat my enemy
with your permission."

79 Śalya replied: "Mahārāja, if, bent on war,
you had failed
to seek my advice, I would have cursed you
into defeat.

80 You have pleased me, you have offered me
your pūjā-respect.
So be it then. You have my permission.
Fight! And may you win.

81 Brave one, tell me, what is it
that you desire?
Except my changing sides,
what is it that you want from me?

82 Mahārāja, a man is the slave of need,
but need is no one's slave.
This is true. I am tied to the Kauravas
by need.

83 Nephew, that is why I sound like a eunuch
when I say,
'Expect my changing sides,
what do you desire?'"

84 Yudhiṣṭhira said: "Mahārāja, I ask only this:
Every day,
think of what is good for me,
even if you fight for another."

85 Śalya said: "Finest of kings,
how can I be of any help?
I am tied to the Kauravas by need.
I fight for them."

86 Yudhiṣṭhira said: "That is the favour I ask –
that you undermine
the strength of the charioteer's son Karṇa
during the battle.

87 *Mātula*! Uncle! I know that Duryodhana
will appoint you
as the charioteer of the Sūta's son Karṇa
during the battle."

88 Śalya replied: "Son of Kuntī,
I will do as you desire.
Go, and fight.
I promise to keep my promise."

89 Having received the Madra-rājā's permission,
his maternal uncle Śalya,
Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers
left the mahā-battlefield.

90 Krishna went to Rādhā's son Karṇa
on the battlefield.
For the sake of the Pāṇḍavas,
Vāsudeva-Krishna said to Karṇa:

91 "Rādheya-Karṇa, I hear that you will not fight
because you hate Bhīṣma.
Till Bhīṣma is killed, son of Rādhā,
why not join us?

92 After Bhīṣma is killed,
you are free to re-join Duryodhana,
if by then you think
that is still the right thing to do."

93 Karṇa replied: "Keśava-Krishna,
I will not undermine Duryodhana in any way.
I am grateful to him. You should know
I have pledged my life to him."

94 Hearing this reply, O Bharata descendant,
Krishna stopped.
He returned to his camp and joined Yudhiṣṭhira
and the others.

95 Suddenly, Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest Pāṇḍava,
in mid-field,
shouted: "Let anyone who wishes to,
now join our side!"

96 It was Yuyutsu who replied cheerfully,
glancing in the direction
of the Pāṇḍavas, to the words
of dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira:

97 "I will fight under your command,
O defectless mahārāja!
If you will accept me,
I will fight on your side."

98 "Come, Yuyutsu, come!" replied Yudhiṣṭhira.
"Vāsudeva-Krishna and all of us say:
'We will together fight
your foolish brothers.'

99 O mahā-muscled hero, I accept your offer.
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's lineage
and his funeral *piṇḍa*-offering
now devolve upon you.

100 O mahā-radiant prince,
accept us as we accept you.
The foolish and hot-tempered Duryodhana
is doomed to die'."

101 Forsaking the Kauravas, your son Yuyutsu
(continued Sañjaya)
defected to the Pāṇḍavas,
to the beating of *dundubhi*-drums.
He accepted on faith the offer
made by Yudhiṣṭhira.

102 Condemning the vicious karma of Duryodhana
and determined to fight,
Yuyutsu crossed over to the side
of the Pāṇḍavas.

103 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers
were hugely pleased;
they prepared for battle
and put on their golden armour.

104 All the bull-brave heroes took up stations
near their chariots.
All soldiers were ordered to form ranks
for battle.

105 They ordered hundreds of *dundubhi*-drums
and cymbals be sounded.
The bull-brave heroes
burst into ferocious leonine roars.

106 Seeing the tigers-among-men Pāṇḍavas
ready in their chariots,
the kings under Dhṛṣṭadyumna shouted
in great joy.

107 Seeing how the noble Pāṇḍavas had honoured
respectworthy persons,
the kings under Dhṛṣṭadyumna shouted
in great joy.

108 All the kings discussed the friendship,
kindness and compassion
shown on all occasions
by the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas.

109 "*Sādhu! Sādhu!* Excellent! Excellent!" –
these were heard everywhere.
Poems of *stuti*-praise were chanted,
inspiring minds and hearts.

110 Ārya or Mleccha – noble-born or low-born –
whoever saw or heard of the conduct
of the Pāṇḍavas, wept; he could not speak,
he was so touched.

SECTION FOURTY-FOUR

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: "The soldiers of my army
and the soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas
were equally ready for battle,
but who attacked first?"

2 Duryodhana and his brothers (said Sañjaya),
under the command of Bhīṣma,
marched to the front line
of battle.

3 Eager to meet the challenge of Bhīṣma,
the Pāṇḍavas
cheerfully advanced to the front line,
led by Bhīma.

4 Lion-like roars, and a confused chamour,
krakacas blaring,
cow-horns, *mṛdaṅga*-drums, cymbals, tabors,
and elephants trumpeting,

5 On both sides. The enemy attacked us,
and we,
with fierce shouts, attacked the enemy.
What a mahā-tumult!

6 They swayed like a forest
that shakes in a storm –
the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
in that mahā battle,
with cymbals and conches
incessantly sounding.

7 The horrendous noise
of Indras-among-men,
of horses and elephants,
during that ominous hour,
resembled a wild
oceanic tempest.

8 And mahā-muscled Bhīma stood up
and bellowed like a bull –
it was a gruesome sound,
a roar that caused horripilation.

9 His roaring rose above the cacophony
of conches and *mṛdaṅga*-drums,
the trumpetings of elephants,
and the soldiers' leonine shouts.

10 The horses of both armies, thousands of them,
neighed loudly;
but Bhīma's roaring drowned the neighings
of the horses.

11 The shouts of Bhīma,
as noisy as the thunderbolts
of Śakra-Indra, filled all your soldiers
with great fear.

12 Hearing the roaring of Bhīma,
horses and elephants
passed urine and dung, as other beasts do
when a lion roars.

13 He looked terrifying as he kept roaring
like a cloud-mass,
alarming your sons. Then, suddenly,
he attacked them.

[VI:44:14-23]

Transcreated by P. Lal

14 As he rushed at them,
Duryodhana and his brothers
shrouded him with arrow-showers,
as clouds shroud the sun.

15 Duryodhana, your sons, Durmukha, Duḥśala, Śala,
Duḥśāsana the chariot-hero, Durmarṣaṇa, and, O king,

16 Viviṁśati, Citrasena, Vikarṇa the mahā-chariot-hero,
Purumitra, Jaya, Bhoja, Somadatta's brave son –

17 They lifted their cloud-black bows,
fitted long arrows
resembling sloughed-off snakes,
and stood ready to take action.
They stood firm, facing the attack
of the Pāṇḍavas.

18 The sons of Draupadī, the mahā-chariot-hero
Abhimanyu,
Nakula, Sahadeva, Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna –

19 These warriors' arrows tore through the ranks
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons
like mahā-thunderbolts splitting apart the peaks
of massive mountains.

20 Neither your soldiers nor the enemy
gained an advantage
in that first clash when bows twanged
and leather-protectors flapped.

21 O bull-brave Bharata, I noticed then
the expert bow-skill
of Drona's disciples whose ceaseless arrows
hit their targets.

22 The twanging of the bows never stopped,
and fiery arrows
flashed through the air like stars twinkling
in the sky.

23 The other lords of the earth stood there, O Bharata,
and watched transfixed
the fascinating, horrendous battle
between two groups of kinsmen.

24 Recalling the wounds suffered earlier, O rājā,
the mahā-chariot-warriors
hurled challenges at each other,
exerting their utmost.

25 They looked magnificent, the two armies
of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas –
the chariots, horses, and elephants looking
like painted figures.

26 Other kings also took up their bows.
Armed with bows and arrows,
they stationed themselves with their armies
on the battlefield.

27 Under orders from Yudhiṣṭhira,
thousands of Pāṇḍava leaders,
shouting and screaming,
charged upon your sons' ranks.

28 It was a fierce and bloody encounter,
painful to watch.
The sun was obscured by clouds
of kicked-up dust.

29 Some fought, some fled,
some ran and then rallied.
It was the same story with your soldiers
and theirs.

30 At the time of that mahā-tumultuous clash,
your father *pitā* Bhīṣma
shone on the battlefield
with a unique heroic lustre.

SECTION FORTY-FIVE

1 O lord of the world, early that morning
(continued Sañjaya)
commenced a fearful battle that shredded
the bodies of many rājās.

2 Each eager for victory,
the Kauravas and the Sṛñjayas
raised lion-roars that shook the earth
and the sky.

3 The cacophony of leather finger-flaps
and the blare of conches!
The leonine roars of warriors shouting
at each other!

4 O bull-brave Bharata!
The twang of bow-strings!
The march of infantry!
The mahā-neighing of horses!

5 The thud of clubs and clang of steel hooks!
The clash of weapons!
The jangling of bells
On necks of colliding elephants!

6 The din of chariot-wheels
That roared like Parjanya-storm-clouds!
All these sounds together!
A horripilating conglomeration!

7 The Kaurava warriors,
absolutely reckless and ruthless,
charged at the Pāṇḍava ranks,
flaunting their flagstaffs.

8 O rājā, lifting a fearful bow
resembling the rod of Kāla,
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma attacked Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
on the battlefield.

9 Tremendously energetic Arjuna lifted
his world-famous Gāṇḍīva,
and rushed at Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma
on the battlefield.

10 Each of the tiger-brave Kauravas
tried to kill the other.
Gāṇgeya-Bhīṣma's arrows harassed Arjuna,
who stood firm.

11 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna attacked Bhīṣma,
but he stood firm also.
The mahā-bowman Sātyaki then attacked
brave Kṛtavarman.

12 A hair-raising encounter followed,
a terrifying duel –
Sātyaki wounded Kṛtavarman,
and Kṛtavarman wounded Sātyaki,

13 Shouting as they drained each other's
vital energies.
Riddled all over their bodies with arrows,
the mahā-powerful heroes

14 Looked like two flowering *kiṁśuka* trees
in springtime.
The mahā-archer Bṛhadbala was targeted
by Abhimanyu,

15 But the rājā of Kosala quickly succeeded
in slicing
Abhimanyu's flagstaff charioteer
and overpowering the of Abhimanyu.

16 Mahārāja! The overpowering of his charioteer
infuriated Abhimanyu,
and he succeeded in wounding Bṛhadbala
with nine arrows.

17 With two arrows foe-chastising Abhimanyu
severed Bṛhadbala's flagstaff,
with one his wheel guard,
with another he killed his charioteer.

18 The two incensed heroes weakened each other
with sharp arrows.
The mahā-chariot-hero proud of his prowess,
and hostile –

19 Your son Duryodhana – decided to attack Bhīma.
Chiefs of the Kauravas, both,
both tigers-among-men,
both mahā-powerful,

[VI:45:20-28]

Transcreated by P. Lal

20 They drowned each other in a rain of arrows
on the battlefield.
Both were mahātmās, both expert in the use
of all weapons.

21 Seeing them, O Bharata,
the world's creatures were awe-struck.
Duḥśāsana decided to attack
mahā-powerful Nakula,

22 Who was wounded by the countless arrows
Duḥśāsana shot.
But Nakula, son of Mādrī,
countered the attack

23 With sharp arrows, smiling, O Bharata,
as he cut Duḥśāsana's bow and flagstaff,
and wounded him
with twenty-five arrows.

24 Your hard-to-defeat son succeeded in killing
Nakula's horses
in a mahā-fearful clash,
and splintering his flagstaff.

25 Durmukha was next;
he attacked mahā-powerful Sahadeva,
and wounded him with a shower of arrows
in a mahā-clash.

26 Brave Sahadeva, in that mahā-battle,
was able to fire an arrow
that felled the charioteer
of Durmukha.

27 Both were indomitable. Each attacked,
and warded off attack;
each terrified the other
with gruesome-looking arrows.

28 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira chose to duel with Śalya,
the rājā of Madra.
O king! Madra's ruler quickly shattered
the bow of Yudhiṣṭhira.

29 But Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
picked up another bow,
even stronger, and designed to shoot swifter
than the first.

30 Shouting "Stand your ground!",
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
showered the king of Madra
with a hail of straight arrows.

31 O descendant of Bharata,
in another part of the field
Dhṛṣṭadyumna attacked Droṇa who, angered,
sliced cleanly

32 In three pieces
the Pāñcāla prince's hard-to-pierce bow.
He fired a mahā-fearful arrow
resembling the rod of Kāla –

33 An arrow that penetrated the body
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
who nevertheless lifted another bow
and shot fourteen arrows

34 In the direction of Droṇa, wounding him.
Drupada's son and Droṇa,
both tempestuously enraged,
continued the duel.

35 Mahārāja, irresistible Śaṅkha attacked Bhūriśravas,
the equally irresistible son of Somadatta,
shouting, "Stand your ground!
Stand your ground!"

36 Brave Śaṅkha rendered the right arm
of Bhūriśravas useless,
but Somadatta's son was able to wound
Śaṅkha's shoulders.

37 O lord of the world! The duel between these
on that battlefield
resembled the ancient clash
between Vāsava-Indra and Vṛtra.

38 O lord of the world! In a fit of rage
the self-confident
mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭaketu
attacked Bāhlīka.

39 Rājā, valiant Bāhlīka let out a leonine roar
and shot a shower of arrows
that debilitated
the furious and fierce Dhṛṣṭaketu.

40 Like one maddened elephant attacking another,
the Cedi rājā-Dhṛṣṭaketu,
infuriated, wounded Bāhlīka
with nine arrows.

41 The two combatants roared and howled
in their anger.
Their wrath made them like the planets
Budha and Aṅgāraka.

42 Cruel-karma-creating Ghaṭotkaca
then targeted and attacked Alambuṣa,
the gruesome-karma-creating rākṣasa,
like Śakra-Indra attacking Bala.

43 Incensed into an incontrollable anger, O Bharata,
Ghaṭotkaca succeeded
in shooting ninety arrows into the body
of mahā-powerful Alambuṣa.

44 But Alambuṣa rallied and was able
to shoot a volley
of hooked and knotted arrows that wounded
the mahā-powerful son of Bhīma.

45 Both Ghaṭotkaca and Alambuṣa looked
as radiantly wounded
as Śakra-Indra and Bala in the war
between gods and antigods.

46 Then, O rājā, powerful Śikhaṇḍin attacked
the son of Droṇa, Aśvatthāman,
who grievously injured Śikhaṇḍin
with a sharp arrow.

47 Similarly, O rājā, Śikhaṇḍin was able
to wound Aśvatthāman,
the son of Droṇa,
with a sharp and accurate weapon.

48 The two continued their duel
on the field of battle,
harassing each other with a variety
of remarkable weapons.

49 Virāṭa, the commander of his army,
launched a fierce attack
against brave Bhagadatta, O rājā,
leading to a wonderful duel.

50 Provoked beyond limit, Virāṭa showered arrows
on Bhagadatta,
like clouds drenching a mountain with rain,
O Bharata.

51 But the lord of earth Bhagadatta retaliated
with a swarm of arrows
that covered Virāṭa like a crowd of clouds
obscuring the sun.

52 Then Kṛpa, son of Śaradvat, attacked
the Kekaya ruler Bṛhatkṣatra,
smothering him inside a shower
of arrows.

53 Bṛhatkṣatra retaliated with an equally strong
counter-shower, O Bharata.
They shredded each other's bows
and killed each other's horses.

54 Chariot-less, they faced each other for battle
with drawn swords.
What followed was a duel
of truly incredible ferocity.

55 O rājā! Foe-chastising Drupada, with great zeal,
attacked Jayadratha,
the king of the Sindhus,
who replied with equal zeal.

56 The rājā of the Sindhus wounded Drupada
with three arrows,
but Drupada succeeded in wounding him
with other weapons.

57 The duel between these two
was fierce and horrendous,
like a conflict between the planets
Śukra and Aṅgāraka.

58 Your son Vikarṇa, on a swift horse,
attacked brave Sutasoma,
and a tremendous duel resulted
between these two heroes.

59 Though he wounded Sutasoma with arrows,
Sutasoma held firm.
Neither was Sutasoma able to shake your son
Vikarṇa's composure.

60 Fighting for the Pāṇḍavas,
tiger-among-men, mahā-chariot-hero Cekitāna
launched an attack
upon Suśarman.

61 But Suśarman blocked his charge, mahārāja,
with a shower of arrows,
and the mahā-chariot-hero Cekitāna
was repulsed.

62 But he rallied and, livid with anger,
he harassed Suśarman
as dark clouds harass a hill
with rain.

63 O Indra-among-rājās,
illustrious and powerful Śakuni attacked
valiant Prativindhya
like an enraged lion an elephant.

64 Infuriated, the son of Yudhiṣṭhira wounded
Subala's son Śakuni with keen arrows,
like Maghavat-Indra wounding
a Dānava anti-god.

65 Mahā-wise Śakuni also retaliated
by piercing
the body of foe-smiting Prativindhya
with his knotted arrows

66 O Indra-among-rājās, Śrutakarman attacked
the mahā-chariot-hero,
valiant Sudakṣiṇa,
the king of the Kāmbojas.

67 Sudakṣiṇa succeeded in wounding Śrutakarman,
the son of Sahadeva,
but failed to rout him;
he stood as firm as Maināka mountain.

68 Incensed, Śrutakarman retaliated with arrows
that penetrated the flesh
of the mahā-chariot-hero Kāmboja king
in many places.

69 Foe-himiliating Irāvat, aflame with anger,
attacked
the easily-angered warrior Śrutāyuṣa
on that battlefield.

70 Arjuna's mahā-chariot-hero son Irāvat
exulted after killing
his opponent's horses,
and scattering his followers.

71 Śrutāyuṣa, roused to anger, retaliated
by a reciprocal killing
of the horses of Phālguna-Arjuna's son
with a massive mace.

72 The two Avantī princes, Vinda and Anuvinda,
attacked Kuntibhoja,
who, with his son, had come,
leading a huge army.

73 I was impressed by the amazing composure
in battle
of the two princes as they fought off
a formidable contingent.

74 Anuvinda wounded Kuntibhoja
with a massive mace,
but Kuntibhoja replied with a shower
of arrows.

75 Kuntibhoja succeeded in wounding Vinda
with arrows,
but was himself wounded
in what was a spectacular duel.

76 O king, the five Kekaya brothers
launched an attack,
with mobile equipment,
on the five princes of Gāndhāra.

77 Your son Vīrabāhu selected for attack
Virāṭa's son Uttara,
a chariot-hero,
and hit him with nine arrows.

79 And Uttara struck back with arrows
and wounded his assailant.
The rājā of Cedi decided to attack
brave Ulūka.

80 O lord of the world! A terrifying duel!
No one was able
to win decisively, but they almost tore
each other part.

81 In that great war, thousands of duels
were fought
between chariot-heroes, elephant-soldiers, horsemen,
and foot-soldiers.

82 For a brief period it was spectacular;
then, O rājā,
it became chaotic –
a medley of confusion and noise.

83 Elephants fought elephants, chariots fought chariots
in that battle;
horsemen fought horsemen,
and foot-soldiers fought foot-soldiers.

84 It was cacophonic, it was terrifying
in every way;
the heroes charged at each other
in wild abandon.

85 The deva-ṛṣis, the Siddhas and Cāraṇas
who witnessed it
thought it was a war between gods
and anti-gods.

86 O king! Suddenly it appeared that thousands
of elephants, chariots,
horsemen and foot-soldiers were indiscriminately
slaughtering each other.

87 O tiger-among-men, wherever one looked,
one saw only duplicate duels
between horsemen, soldiers, chariots,
and elephants.

SECTION FORTY-SIX

1 Rājā, descendant of Bharata (said Sañjaya),
let me describe
the clash of thousands of soldiers fighting
with blind fury.

2 Son failed to recognise his father,
and father his son,
brother his brother,
sister's son his maternal uncle.

3 Maternal uncle failed to recognise
his sister's son,
friend his friend. Pāṇḍava fought Kaurava
with demonic fury.

4 Some chariot-heroes careened their chariots
with such skill
that they ripped apart the yokes
of their opponents' chariots.

5 Chariot-shaft smashed violently
against chariot-shaft,
chariot-spike grazed against chariot-spike.
Formation demolished formation,

6 But the aim was to be first to kill.
Chariots blocked attacking chariots.
Massive elephants toppled
on rival elephants;

7 Their tusks ripped open the hides
of other elephants.
Flags waving on their backs,
slashed by fierce tusks,

8 These elephants, mahārāja,
reeled about in confusion,
rushing at their opponents,
and trumpeting in agony.

9 Prodded by pikes and hooks, the elephants
who responded to skilled training
attacked their wild
rutting adversaries.

10 And when the rutting elephants attacked,
even massive elephants fled
in all directions, screaming thinly
like *krauñca*-cranes.

11 Many well-disciplined elephants,
temples streaming with rutting juice,
severely mutilated by swords,
lances and sharp arrows,

12 Trumpeted in pain;
some, mortally wounded, dropped dead.
Shrieking horrendously, some fled everywhere,
helter-skelter.

13 Foot-soldiers, deputed to protect the elephants,
broad-chested soldiers,
experts in routing foes with pikes, bows,
battle-axes,

14 Maces, clubs, arrows, spears, shafts,
and heavy bludgeons
with handles of iron,
and other weapons

15 Including swords polished
to a dazzling-bright lustre,
ran crazily with the sole aim
of killing each other.

16 The swords of valiant soldiers
who smote each other
shone with brighter brilliance
when stained with blood.

17 The swish of the swords
grew louder and louder
as brave arms lifted them
and swung them around.

18 Battered by maces and clubs,
struck by gleaming swords,
pierced and pulped
by the tusks of elephants,

19 The soldiers emitted long and loud yells
of pain, O Bharata,
like the wailing of the spirits
of the dead.

20 Astonishingly swift horses with tails
like the feathers of a *haṁsa*-swan
rushed at each other
with intent to kill.

21 Their riders hurled long, swift,
polished, sharp, gold plated darts
that fell hissing
like countless snakes.

22 A few heroic riders on swift horses
galloped across,
leapt on mahā-chariots, and lopped off the heads
of chariot-heroes,

23 Occasionally a chariot-warrior,
getting cavalry within range,
would wipe out the horsemen with sharp,
knotted *bhalla*-arrows.

24 Maddened elephants, caparisoned in gold
and as splendid looking
as new-born clouds, battered and trampled
horses to death.

25 Pierced near their temples,
and wounded in their haunches,
flesh ripped by lances, many elephants
trumpeted in grisly agony.

26 Panic everywhere! In the absolute chaos
that prevailed,
elephants toppled horses and riders,
and crushed both.

27 After toppling and crushing
both rider and horse,
the elephants roamed about,
trampling flag-staffs and chariots.

28 Mahā male-elephants, rutting juice
trickling down their temples,
tusked and crushed horses and riders
to death.

29 Shining-bright, sharp-tipped, wind-swift
snake-arrows
struck the heads, temples, haunches, and sides
of elephants.

30 O lord of the earth! Dazzling-bright javelins,
hurled by the arms
of valiant soldiers, sped like meteors,
slicing through bodies
of men and horses,
ripping open coats of mail.

31 Unsheathing sharp swords from scabbards
of tiger-skin and leopard-skin,
soldiers ruthlessly killed
their adversaries.

32 Though mangled and mutilated,
their flesh a plethora of blood,
soldiers continued to fight with swords, shields,
and battle-axes.

33 Overturning chariots with their trunks,
elephants roamed
in every direction, prompted by the shouts
of men behind them.

34 Lacerated by javelins,
cut down by battle-axes,
trampled by elephants,
crushed under horse-hooves,

35 Soldiers fled helter-skelter,
shouting for their kinsmen.
They screamed for fathers, sons, brothers,
and friends.

36 O rājā! They screamed for maternal uncles,
sisters' sons, and others.
Some were weaponless, O Bharata,
some had their thighs crushed,

37 Some kept wailing that they wanted
only to live;
some were limbless, arms shredded,
sides bleeding.

38 Some simply lay there, drained of strength.
O lord of the world,
they begged for water
for their parched throats.

39 Some, dripping blood, and debilitated,
sprawled there, O Bharata,
cursing themselves
and cursing all your sons.

40 O glorious monarch! Brave dedicated Kṣatriyas,
though wounded,
did not surrender their weapons,
and made no complaint.

41 They lay where they lay,
loudly proclaiming their pride,
biting their lips with gritted teeth
in their anger,

42 And peering at each other with narrowed eyes;
others, also,
strong, remained still and calm,
enduring arrow-wounds;

43 Mahā-brave chariot-heroes,
who had lost their own chariots,
or been ejected from them,
or been mauled by elephants,

44 Lay there, and pleaded that they be taken
on the chariots of others;
many of them, mahārāja,
looked like *kiṁśuka*-flowers.

45 In that hero-destroying battle,
horrendous cries were heard.
Many brave soldiers perished
in that awesome mahā-carnage:

46 Son killed father,
father killed son,
sister's son killed maternal uncle,
maternal uncle killed sister's son,

47 *Sakhā*-friend killed loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friend,
relative slaughtered relative.
Between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas,
what a massacre it was!

48 No quarter was given
in that vicious and bloody battle,
and eventually the Pāṇḍava ranks
began to weaken.

49 O bull-brave Bharata rājā!
It was mahā-muscled Bhīṣma
with his silver five-starred palmtree flag
on his mahā-chariot
who reigned supreme, like the moon
on Meru mountain.

SECTION FORTY-SEVEN

1 When most of that terrible day was over
(continued Sañjaya)
in which so many mahā-valiant heroes
were exterminated,

2 Durmukha, Kṛtavarman, Kṛpa, Śalya,
and Viviṁśati,
under your son's leadership,
joined ranks to reinforce Bhīṣma.

3 Assisted by those splendid mahā-chariot-heroes,
Bhīṣma succeeded
in driving a wedge
within the Pāṇḍava ranks.

4 His palmtree-emblemed flag seemed
to slice through
the formations of Cedis, Kāśis, Karūṣas,
and Pāñcālas.

5 Bhīṣma's mahā-swift, broad-headed, knotted
bhalla-arrows,
sliced the heads, flagstaffs, and harnesses
of the chariot-warriors.

6 O bull-brave Bharata!
It looked as if Bhīṣma was dancing!
Elephants wounded by his weapons
trumpeted in agony.

7 Abhimanyu, enraged, charged upon Bhīṣma,
in a chariot
which was pulled by excellent
brown-skinned horses,

8 And radiant with a flagstaff of Jāmbū-gold
flaming like a *karṇikāra* tree.
He attacked Bhīṣma
and the five heroes.

9 He fired a sharp arrow at the flag
with the palm-tree symbol,
and engaged in close combat with Bhīṣma
and his protectors.

10 He wounded Kṛtavarman with one,
and Śālya with five arrows;
he harassed his great-grandfather Bhīṣma
with nine arrows.

11 With a single arrow from his bow
pulled completely taut,
he sliced the Jāmbū-gold flagstaff
on Bhīṣma's chariot.

12 With a single swift knotted all-piercing
bhalla-arrow,
he severed the head of the charioteer
of Durmukha.

13 A third arrow shattered the gold-worked bow
of Kṛpa.
His sharp arrows created havoc
among those warriors.

14 The mahā-chariot hero seemed to be dancing
as he skilfully shot them.
The assembly of gods was delighted
with his dexterity.

15 Noticing the accuracy of Abhimanyu's aim,
the chariot-heroes
led by Bhīṣma concluded he was as good
as his father Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

16 His bow had the reverberating twang
of the Gāṇḍīva-bow;
as he pulled and relaxed it,
it resembled a circle of fire.

17 Foe-exterminating Bhīṣma suddenly attacked
Ārjuni-Abhimanyu,
and succeeded in wounding the son of Arjuna
with nine mahā-swift arrows,

18 Shattering his flagstaff with three more
bhalla-arrows;
then rigid-vowed Bhīṣma attacked
the charioteer of Abhimanyu.

19 Though Kṛtavarman, Kṛpa and Śalya
harassed Abhimanyu,
he stood as immovably firm
as the Maināka mountain.

20 Though hemmed in by the mahā-chariot-heroes
of Duryodhana's army,
Arjuna's son continued raining arrows
at the five chariot-heroes.

21 Neutralising their mahā-weapons
with a shower of arrows
and harassing Bhīṣma with another arrow-shower,
Abhimanyu roared.

22 He seemed to be a warrior
of incredible physical prowess, O rājā,
as he stood there, fighting steadily,
harassing Bhīṣma.

23 Bhīṣma also shot arrows
at tremendously powerful Abhimanyu,
who succeeded in repulsing them
without too much effort.

24 With nine arrows, brave Abhimanyu sliced
Bhīṣma's flagstaff.
There was a deafening roar of approval
from the spectators.

25 The palm-tree-symbolled flagstaff,
decorated with gems
and plated with gold, sliced by Subhadra's son,
toppled, O Bharata.

26 O bull-brave Bharata!
When he saw the flagstaff fall,
Bhīma shouted encouragement
to Subhadrā's son.

27 In that mahā-fierce battle,
mahā-powerful Bhīṣma
materialised innumerable supernatural
mahā-weapons.

28 The infinite-ātmaned great-grandfather
of Abhimanyu overpowered Subhadrā's son
with thousands of arrows.
Wonderful, wonderful!

29 Ten mahā-chariot-warriors
and mahā-bowmen
of the Pāṇḍava ranks rushed on chariots
to rescue Abhimanyu.

30 O lord of the world! They were Virāṭa and his son,
Pṛṣata's descendant Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Bhīma, the five Kekaya brothers,
and Sātyaki.

31 As they charged furiously at him,
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
wounded the Pāñcāla princes with three arrows
and Sātyaki with ten.

32 With a single razor-sharp winged arrow
which he fired
from a bow stretched taut,
he splintered Bhīma's flagstaff.

33 Bhīma's gold-plated lion-emblemed flagstaff,
O finest of men,
sliced by the arrow of Bhīṣma,
toppled from the chariot.

34 But Bhīma managed to wound Śāntanu's son
with three arrows,
Kṛpa with one arrow,
and Kṛtavarman with eight arrows.

35 Virāṭa's son Uttara, riding an elephant
with uplifted trunk,
manoeuvred the beast into charging at Śalya,
the rājā of Madra.

36 Śalya was able to check
the furious attack
of that king-elephant
charging at his chariot.

37 The Indra-among-elephants succeeded
in furiously
trampling to death
four of Śalya's excellent horses.

38 Madra's ruler, from his chariot
whose horses had been crushed,
hurled a steel snake-dart
in order to kill Uttara.

39 The dart pierced Uttara's armour,
and he lost consciousness,
and fell; his lance and elephant-hook
slipped from his hands.

40 Śalya drew his sword,
jumped down from his splendid chariot,
and with a mighty stroke dismembered
the king-elephant's trunk.

41 His armour shredded by hundreds of arrows,
his trunk lopped off,
the elephant screamed, collapsed,
and perished.

42 O lord of men! After this wonderful feat,
Śalya, the rājā of Madra,
quickly climbed into the chariot
of Kṛtavarman.

43 Seeing his brother Uttara killed,
and seeing Śalya
leaping inside the splendid chariot
of Kṛtavarman,

44 Virāṭa's son Śveta blazed with anger,
as fire blazes with ghee.
He picked up his mahā bow,
which resembled Śakra-Indra's bow,

45 And rushed on the Madra ruler Śalya
to kill him.
Surrounded on all sides
by many chariot-heroes,

46 He succeeded in shooting a hail of arrows
 on his foe.
Seeing him charge into battle
 like a musth elephant,

47 Seven chariot-heroes from your ranks
 hemmed him in,
hoping to save the Madra rājā Śalya
 from the jaws of death –

48 Bṛhadbala the king of Kośala, Jayatsena of Magadha,
Rukmaratha the illustrious son of Śalya; and, O rājā,

49 Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti, Sudakṣiṇa of Kāmboja,
Bṛhatkṣatra's son Jayadratha king of the Sindhus.

50 The multi-coloured, stretched bows
 of these mahātmās
flashed across the battlefield
 like streaks of lightning.

51 They deluged the head of Śveta
 with showers of arrows,
like wind-driven clouds drenching a hill
 with monsoon rains.

52 Leader of an army, Śveta was enraged
 at this affront,
and swiftly shot seven thick arrows
 at their bows,

53 Slicing them in an instant,
 but, O Bharata,
with amazing alacrity
 they fitted new bows.

54 That mahā-muscled and infinite-ātmaned
 warrior Śveta
fired seven more *bhalla* arrows
 at his adversaries,
and again succeeded in splitting apart
 their bows.

55 Their bows smashed,
 the heroic mahā-chariot-warriors,
livid with anger, brandished *śakti*-darts
 and shouted fiercely.

56 O best of the Bharatas,
the seven *śaktis* sped
towards Śveta's chariot with the speed
of Mahendra-Indra's thunderbolt.

57 But Śveta skilfully countered
and neutralised them
with seven arrows shot with great accuracy.
With an all-piercing arrow,

58 Śveta tried to annihilate Rukmaratha.
O best of the Bharatas,
that mahā-shaft sped like a thunderbolt
at his adversary.

59 Hit by the arrow, Rukmartha collapsed
in his chariot, O rājā.
He seemed to be dazed,
he seemed to be unconscious.

60 But his charioteer, in no way unnerved,
drove him away
in that bewildered condition
from the battlefield.

61 Shooting six more gold-plated arrows,
mahā-muscled Śveta
succeeded in cutting off the flagstaffs
of his six adversaries.

62 He wounded their horses and charioteers
with a stream of arrows;
then, O foe-vanquisher,
he rushed at Śalya's chariot.

63 A great confusion and cacophonous hullabaloo
from your army, O Bharata,
accompanied the attack on Śalya
by general Śveta.

64 Placing Bhīṣma in charge,
Duryodhana, your mahā-powerful son,
along with many other heroes,
attacked Śveta's chariot.

65 He rescued the rājā of Madra
from certain death.
A tumultuous horripilating clash of arms
took place.

66 Elephants and chariots fought
in indescribable chaos.
Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu, Bhīma,
the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,

67 The Kekaya prince Virāṭa,
Drupada's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
the Cedis, the Matsyas,
and other lion-brave warriors –
the Kaurava Pitāmaha Bhīṣma rained arrows
on all of them.

SECTION FORTY-EIGHT

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked: "Sañjaya, tell me,
when the mahā-archer Śveta
attacked Śalya's chariot,
what did the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas do?

2 What did Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma do?
Tell me all this in detail."
Sañjaya replied: Hundreds of thousands
of bull-brave Kṣatriyas,

3 All mahā-chariot-heroes, stationed general Śveta
at their head, O Bharata,
and, in a magnificent display of strength
before your son,

4 The Pāṇḍavas made an attempt to rescue Śveta.
Śikhaṇḍin led them.
The mahā-chariot-heroes rushed in a body
at Bhīṣma's golden chariot,

5 Determined to exterminate him.
A frightening encounter resulted.
Let me describe to you in detail
the mahā-tumultuous carnage

6 That took place in the ranks of your soldiers
and the enemy's ranks.
Śāntanu's son made many chariots empty
of occupants,

7 For the chariot-hero sliced off heads
with his arrows.
His dazzling skill at bowcraft obscured
the sun itself.

8 He wiped out his foes as the rising sun
wipes out darkness.
In that encounter, O rājā,
he fired thousands of arrows,

9 Irresistible, mahā-swift arrows that killed
thousands of Kṣatriyas.
He decapitated hundreds of brave warriors
in that skirmish.

10 He knocked down elephants resplendent
in spike-studded armour
as thunderbolts shatter mountains. O lord of the world!
Everywhere a blur of chariots:

11 Horses galloped off by themselves confusedly,
Clutching bows,
young riders, dead, hanging in the saddle,
were dragged away.

12 A great chaos of chariots, O rājā,
fleeing helter-skelter!
Still wearing swords, dressed in armour,
carrying quivers,

13 Hundreds of soldiers lay on the ground
worthy of heroes.
Soldiers fell down, rose, attacked each other
in the confusion;

14 They were locked in single combat,
fighting hand to hand.
Hit violently in duels, they rolled over
on the ground.

15 Hundreds of splendidly uniformed soldiers
dressed in gold apparel
fought their counterparts; some were killed
on the spot.

16 O Bharata! Others could be seen
fleeing the battlefield.
Maddened elephants charged in fury
on chariots,

17 Crushing vehicle and chariot-occupant
to death.
Some heroes were knocked out of chariots
by arrows.

18 Their charioteers killed, some chariots overturned
and were smashed.
Clouds of dust spiralled,
obscuring the fierce goings-on.

19 Soldiers guessed the presence of enemies
by the twang of their bow-strings,
or by the sheer pressure
of their bodies.

20 And they fought on, shooting in the direction
of twanging sounds, O rājā.
The war-shouts of the soldiers added
to the fearful medley.

21 The noise of the drums
seemed to split open ear-drums.
It was impossible to make out
who said what, and when.

22 Even the name-shoutings meant as introductions
were drowned.
The arrows of Bhīṣma created havoc
among his enemies.

23 The arrows of Bhīṣma made foe and friend
both tremble.
It was a fearful and inspiring
and horripilating battle –

24 A battle in which even father failed
to recognise son.
Wheels were smashed, yokes wrenched,
horses killed –

25 And chariot-warriors and charioteers
hurled out of chariots.
Many un-charioted heroes could be seen,
on that battleground,

26 Running for their lives in all directions.
Elephants butchered;
soldiers' heads cut off, some had hands severed,
some had horses killed.

27 When Bhīṣma attacked,
no one escaped physical damage.
In that mahā-skirmish
Śveta also killed many Kauravas.

28 He slew hundreds of princes,
all of them chariot-heroes;
his arrows chopped their heads,
O bull-brave Bharata.

29 His arrows pierced
the richly-ornamented coats of mail.
He destroyed chariot-heroes, chariot-wheels,
and flagstaffs,

30 Mahā-expensive pennants and umbrellas, O Bharata.
O lord of the world!
Horses, chariots, and humans
were among the victims

31 Of Śveta's attack, and he slaughtered hundreds
of elephants, O Bharata.
Fear of Śveta made us desert Bhīṣma
and flee for safety;

32 That is how we are now present
before your majesty.
Staying out of the range of Śveta's arrows,
O Kaurava descendant,

33 The Kauravas, though armed, stood witnesses
to the mahā-battle.
Unperturbed in that critical moment
of lonely despair,

34 Bhīṣma, tiger-among-men,
stood as firm as mount Meru.
Wiping out his foeṣ like Śavita the sun
terminating a cold winter,

35 Bhīṣma stood in his chariot,
refulgent like the sun.
He continued shooting arrows
in their direction,

36 Like Vajrapāṇi-Indra, the thunderbolt-wielder,
smiting the anti-gods.
Pursued by mahā-powerful Bhīṣma
in that awesome battle,

37 Soldiers broke ranks and fled everywhere.
O foe-smiting one!
The only person who fought coolly
was imperturbable, confident

38 Bhīṣma. He was devoted to Duryodhana,
and he harassed the Pāṇḍavas
by his fearless attacks on Śveta
in that mahā-clash.

39 He slaughtered many Pāṇḍava soldiers,
O lord of the world.
Your father, Bhīṣma-Devavrata,
launched an attack

40 On Śveta, when that general began troubling
your soldiers.
Bhīṣma was covered with a net of arrows
fired by Śveta.

41 And Bhīṣma in turn covered Śveta
with an arrow-net.
The two snorted like bulls,
roared like two *musth* maha-elephants,

42 Like two wild tigers,
as they charged at each other.
Neutralising each other's weapons with counter-weapons,
the two bull-brave heroes,

43 Bhīṣma and Śveta fought,
committed to kill each other.
Bhīṣma in one day would have wiped out
the Pāṇḍavas

44 With his arrows had Śveta not been there
to prevent it.
Seeing the grandsire forced to retreat
by Śveta,

45 The Pāṇḍavas were elated,
and your son lost hope.
Enraged, Duryodhana,
flanked by the rulers of the earth,

46 Launched a fierce counter-attack
against the Pāṇḍavas.
Durmukha, Kṛtavarman, Kṛpa,
and the earth-lord Śalya,

47 Under orders from Duryodhana,
rushed to protect Bhīṣma.
Seeing Duryodhana and his earth-rulers
cutting off

48 The Pāṇḍava forces and decimating them,
Śveta called off his attack
on Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma,
concentrating on your son,

49 And attacked with the ferocity
of a tree-uprooting gale.
O rājā! Virāṭa's son Śveta seemed to be blinded
by his anger.

50 Routing your army, he re-commenced
his attack on Bhīṣma.
O rājā! The two mahā-powerful heroes
shot arrows

51 Like two mahātmās,
like Vāsava-Indra battling with Vṛtra.
Both were determined, O mahārāja,
to kill each other.

52 With his bow pulled fully taut,
Śveta wounded Bhīṣma
with seven arrows; but Bhīṣma blocked
any further attack.

53 They fought like one musth elephant
fighting another.
Śveta again took the initiative,
and wounded Śāntanava-Bhīṣma

54 With twentyfive knotted arrows –
a marvellous feat.
Śāntanu's son replied with a volley
of ten arrows,

55 Which severely wounded Śveta,
though he stood mountain-firm.
In fierce anger, the son of Virāṭa
pulled his bow taut;

56 Śveta, delighter of the Kṣatriya race,
continued to harass Bhīṣma.
He smiled, he licked the corners of his mouth
till as far as his ears,

57 And with nine arrows splintered Bhīṣma's bow
into ten fragments.
Then, fitting a feathered steel arrow,
he fired

58 And sliced the top half
of Bhīṣma's palm-tree-emblemed flagstaff.
Seeing the standard of mahātmā-Bhīṣma
ripped apart and toppling,

59 Your sons briefly assumed
that Śveta had killed Bhīṣma.
The Pāṇḍavas in great delight blew loudly
on their conches

60 When they saw the flag of Bhīṣma smashed
   and toppled.
Duryodhana, fiercely roused, exhorted his heroes
   to battle:

61 "Form ranks to protect Bhīṣma!
Surround him and save him!
On no account must Śveta be allowed
To kill Bhīṣma before our very eyes!

62 You have my word of truth that Bhīṣma,
Śāntanu's son, is an unparalleled hero!"
These words of rājā Duryodhana inspired
The mahā-chariot-heroes of his army,

63 And they re-organised their fourfold ranks
   to protect Bhīṣma.
Bāhlīka, and Kṛtavarman, and Śala,
   and Śalya,

64 Jalasaṁdha, and Vikarṇa, and Citrasena,
   and Viviṁśati,
with amazing swiftness, surrounded Bhīṣma
   on all sides,

65 And began pounding Śveta with a variety
   of weapons.
Incensed, the mahā-chariot-hero Śveta
   shot arrows

66 With marvellously dexterity.
   His infinite-ātmaned skill succeeded.
Like a lion confronting and blocking
   an elephant-herd,

67 Śveta faced the warriors,
   and cut Bhīṣma's bow with arrows.
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma picked up another bow
   and wounded Śveta

68 With arrows that were fitted
   with feathers of *kaṅka*-birds.
Śveta, tremendously angered,
   wounded Bhīṣma with steel arrows

69 Fired in the presence of the heroes.
O rājā!
Rājā Duryodhana,
seeing Bhīṣma almost incapacitated

70 By Śveta – the hero of the worlds
blocked by Śveta –
almost gave up hope.
A great fear overshadowed your army.

71 Seeing the repeated attacks made by Śveta
on heroic Bhīṣma,
people got the impression
that Bhīṣma had been killed.

72 The spectacle of his shattered flagstaff
and routed followers
put your *pitā*, Devavrata-Bhīṣma,
in a towering rage.

73 Mahārāja, he shot innumerable arrows
at Śveta,
who managed to check them
with a counter-shower.

74 In fact, one heavy arrow sundred
your father's bow.
O rājā! This infuriated the son of Gaṅgā,
Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma,

75 So much so that he picked up another bow
and fitted it
with seven specially sharpened arrows
of stone;

76 With four of these he killed the four horses
of Śveta,
with two he cut the flagstaff,
with the seventh the charioteer

77 Whose head was sliced by the swift speed
of the *bhalla*-arrow.
Mahā-powerful Śveta, seeing horses and charioteer
slain, leapt off

78 His chariot, and was lost
in the deepest dejection.
Seeing Śveta, the chariot-hero, unchurioted,
Pitāmaha Bhīṣma

79 Pressed his advantage by attacking him
with arrow-showers.
Harassed by the continuous stream
of Bhīṣma's arrows,

80 Śveta left his bow in his chariot,
and aimed a golden *śakti*,
a fearful *śakti*, a mahā-fearful,
all-annihilating weapon

81 Which resembled the rod of Kāla,
like the licking tongue of Death.
On that battlefield Śveta angrily shouted
to Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma:

82 "Stand where you are, Bhīṣma,
be a man, and see my prowess!"
Saying this to Bhīṣma,
the brave, infinite-ātmaned warrior

83 Released that *śakti*, which was as deadly
as a venomous snake,
for the welfare of the Pāṇḍavas
and for his own glory.

84 These were mahā-shouts of "Hai! Hai!
from your assembled sons
when they saw the death-rod-dazzling *śakti* streak,
O lord of the world,

85 Like a snake that has cast off its slough,
like a mahā-meteor, O rājā,
that flashes through the sky –
that *śakti* released by Śveta.

86 But your father Devavrata-Bhīṣma
was in no way perturbed, O rājā,
seeing the golden missile whizzing at him
in flaming splendour.

87 With eight or nine arrows
he splintered the *śakti*;
his arrows disintegrated
the dazzling, golden weapon.

88 Your sons began shouting their joy.
O bull-brave Bharata!
Virāṭa's son, however,
almost fainted in anger.

89 Kāla clouded his judgment; his death was near,
and he was confused.
Anger-bewildered, but smiling,
Virāṭa's son, O rājā,

90 Brandished a massive mace
with which to kill Bhīṣma.
Eyes livid with anger,
looking like rod-wielding Antaka-Yama,

91 He fell upon Bhīṣma
like a flood on a mountain.
Realising the difficulty of controlling him,
illustrious Bhīṣma

92 Shrewdly jumped down from the chariot,
to escape the blow.
But Śveta, wildly whirling his mace
above his head,

93 Flung it at Bhīṣma's chariot with the strength
of Dhaneśvara-Kubera.
Aimed at Bhīṣma, the mace smashed to smithereens
the chariot,

94 Its flag, its horses, and its charioteer.
When they saw
finest of chariot-heroes Bhīṣma
rendered chariot-less,

95 Śalya and other chariot-heroes
raced across the battlefield.
Climbing into another chariot
and twanging his bow-string, wanly

96 Smiling, Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma advanced slowly
towards Śveta.
As he did so, Bhīṣma distinctly heard
a voice

97 In the sky – a divine voice –
speaking for his welfare:
"Bhīṣma!
Bhīṣma!
Mahā-muscled one!
Do not waste time!

98 Viśva-yoni Brahmā the World-Creator
Has chosen this moment
For your victory."
Hearing the words of the god-messenger,

99 Bhīṣma resolved to attack and kill Śveta
instantly.
Seeing the chariot-hero Śveta
without his chariot,

100 Many mahā-chariot-heroes rushed
to rescue him,
among them Sātyaki, Bhīma
and Pṛṣata's descendant Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

101 The Kekaya princes, Dhṛṣṭaketu,
and heroic Abhimanyu.
Seeing this, Droṇa, Śalya, Kṛpa
and many others,

102 Under infinite-ātmaned Bhīṣma's leadership,
intercepted them like a hill
stopping a storm. Seeing the mahātmā Pāṇḍava
rescuers blocked,

103 Śveta, with a single stroke,
sliced Bhīṣma's bow.
Flinging away his incapacitated bow,
Pitāmaha Bhīṣma,

104 Abiding by the advice of the god-messenger,
decided to waste
no more time;
your *pitā*, Devarata-Bhīṣma,

105 Mahā-chariot-hero, picked up another bow
and swiftly fitted arrows to it.
It was a bow as resplendent
as the bow of Śakra-Indra.

106 O finest of the Bharatas! Your father,
seeing Śveta surrounded
by tigers-among-men, receiving
special protection from Bhīma himself,

107 Decided to launch an attack all by himself
against general Śveta.
The illustrious warrior Bhīṣma,
intercepted by Bhīma,

108 Shot sixty arrows at him, which halted Bhīma,
the mahā-chariot-hero.
Your father, Devavrata-Bhīṣma, finest of Bharatas,
targeted Abhimanyu

109 And wounded him with three swift
knotted arrows.
Pitāmaha Bhīṣma frustrated Sātyaki
with a volley of one hundred arrows,

110 Dhṛṣṭadyumna with twenty,
and the Kekaya princes with five.
Your father, Devarata-Bhīṣma,
after doing this,

111 Concentrated his attention on Śveta.
Fitting an arrow
that was like death itself,
and pulling his bow taut,

112 Bhīṣma aimed that winged arrow,
as powerful as the Brāhma-missile,
invoked success,
and released it.

113 That arrow was seen flashing past
by gods, gandharvas, *piśācas*,
uraga-serpents, and rākṣasas;
it pierced armour and heart –

114 A flaming arrow that struck
as mahā-lightning strikes the earth.
Like the sun hurriedly gathering its rays
and sinking in the west,

115 The arrow sped through Śveta's body,
taking his life.
We saw that lion-among-men Śveta
killed by Bhīṣma.

116 We saw him topple like the shattered peak
of a mountain.
The Kṣatriya mahā-chariot-heroes
of the Pāṇḍava ranks mourned.

117 The soldiers led by your son
rejoiced at his death.
Seeing Śveta killed, O rājā,
your son Duḥśāsana

118 Danced on the battlefield
to the music of conches and drums.
When the mahā-archer was killed
by glorious Bhīṣma,

119 The Pāṇḍava mahā-archers, led by Śikhaṇḍin,
were desolated.
O rājā, Dhanañjaya-Arjuna and Vārṣṇeya-Krishna
and many others,

120 Seeing Śveta fall, began slowly retreating.
Both your soldiers
and the soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas
started temporarily withdrawing.

121 The foe-chastising Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes
returned to their camps,
dispirited, and recalled the great carnage
on the battlefield
wrought by Śveta
in the ferocious chariot-duels.

SECTION FORTY-NINE

1 "*Tāta,* dear Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"what did the mahā-archers,
the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas, do
when their general Śveta died?

2 After Śveta was killed, what were the reactions
and confrontations
of those who succeeded in their mission
and those who retreated?

3 When you speak of victory, Sañjaya,
I am pleased.
I am not ashamed
though I realise we did wrong.

4 The elderly general Bhīṣma is confident
and devoted to us.
Virāṭa's intelligent son Śveta had some differences
with his father,

5 For which reason he sought the protection
of the Pāṇḍavas.
For some time he gave up everything
and was inconsolable.

6 Later, as a result of the influence
of the Pāṇḍavas,
he decided to adopt the path
of noble conduct.

7 What I cannot understand
is how the transformed prince,
though protected by Yudhiṣṭhira,
succeeded in getting himself killed.

8 My son Duryodhana is ignoble-minded.
I know this.
I know that neither Bhīṣma nor ācārya Droṇa
wanted war.

9 Neither did Kṛpa, nor Gāndhāri, nor I,
Nor Vasudeva's son Krishna, nor dharmarāja
Yudhiṣṭhira,

10 Nor Bhīma, Arjuna, and the two bull-brave twins.
In spite of warnings from me, Gāndhārī, Vidura,

11 Jamadagni's son, Balarāma, and mahātmā Vyāsa,
Aggressive and wicked-minded Duryodhana, Sañjaya,

12 Along with Duḥśāsana, preferred the vicious advice
Of Karṇa and Śakuni, and mistreated the Pāṇḍavas.

13 Sañjaya, I have a feeling
Duryodhana is doomed.
After the killing of Śveta,
and the victory of Bhīṣma,

14 What did the angered two do –
Krishna and Pārtha-Arjuna?
Tāta! Child! I fear Arjuna.
That fear makes me restless.

15 Kuntī's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna is energetic
and superbly valiant.
I fear that his arrows
will shred all his enemies.

16 Seeing Indra's son Arjuna, who equals Upendra,
Indra's younger brother Krishna,
and whose wrathful purpose is always fulfilled,
what did you feel?

17 He is brave.
He is wise in the Vedas.
He dazzles like fire or the sun.
He knows the use of the Indra-missile.
He is an infinite-ātmaned warrior
Who destroys his enemies.

18 He strikes his enemies with thunderbolt force.
He is astonishingly quick in sword-play.
Kuntī's son is an all-weapons mahā-chariot-hero.

19 Sañjaya, Drupada's invincible son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
is mahā-wise.
What did he do when he heard that Śveta
had been killed?

20 I know that the thought of their general
dying in that way,
and the thoughts of the wrongs they suffered earlier,
made them furious.

21 Sañjaya, I imagine them angry,
and I toss restless
day and night, because of Duryodhana.
Tell me all about the battle."

22 Sañjaya replied:
Duryodhana is not the only one guilty.
You have done wrong too, O rājā,
Listen to me coolly.

23 Your logic is like digging a well
after a house starts burning.
It is like building a dam
after the floods have struck.

24 The afternoon passed, and soon after
battle resumed
between the forces on your side
and those on the Pāṇḍavas.

25 Seeing Virāṭa's general Śveta
killed in battle,
and Kṛtavarman and Śalya
ready for combat,

26 Śaṅkha flared up in anger
like a ghee-fed sacred fire.
He pulled his massive Indra-bow fully taut;
the great hero

27 Pounced upon the king of Madra
with murderous intent.
Supporting his attack
were countless chariot-heroes.

28 Covered by a shower of arrows,
he rushed ahead
with the fury of a musth elephant
on a rampage.

29 Seven chariot-heroes from your ranks
encircled him
in order to save the Madra rājā Śalya
from the jaws of death –

30 Kosala's king Bṛhadbala, Jayatsena of Magadha,
Śalya's respectworthy son Rukmaratha, O rājā,

31 The Avanti princes Vinda and Anuvinda,
Kāmboja's Sudakṣiṇa,
And Bṛhatksatra's son Jayadratha of the Sindhus.

32 The multi-coloured bows
of these mahātmā heroes
gleamed on the field
like lightnings in clouds.

33 They rained a steady stream of arrows
on Śaṅkha,
like wind-blown clouds drenching hills
with post-summer rains.

34 But Śaṅkha, roused to intense wrath,
shot seven arrows
which ripped apart their seven bows.
He roared.

35 Mahā-muscled Bhīṣma, roaring like a storm-cloud,
and carrying a *tāla-mātra* bow
four arm's lengths long,
launched an attack on Śaṅkha.

36 Seeing the mahā-powerful mahā-bow-brandishing
hero bear down upon them,
the Pāṇḍava forces trembled
like a storm-buffeted boat.

37 Arjuna quickly placed himself
in front of Śaṅkha,
and a fierce encounter took place
between Arjuna and Bhīṣma.

38 Shouts of "Hai! Hai!" from the soldiers
on the battlefield.
Force meets force! they screamed,
and they marvelled.

39 O bull-brave Bharata! Brandishing his mace,
Salya jumped from down his chariot,
and, with irresistible violence,
killed Śaṅkha four horses.

40 His horses killed, Śaṅkha leapt down too,
sword in hand,
ran and mounted Arjuna's chariot,
and was again at ease.

41 From Bhīṣma's chariot
flew a swarm of winged arrows
that completely obscured
the sky and the earth.

42 The arrows of excellent Bhīṣma
methodically wiped out
the warriors of the Pāñcālas, Matsyas, Kekayas,
and Prabhadrakas.

43 Ignoring ambidexterous Savyasācī Pāṇḍava-Arjuna,
O rājā,
Bhīṣma rushed at the Pāñcāla king,
soldier-surrounded Drupada.

44 He fired a fierce hail of arrows
at his dear relative.
O rājā! Like a forest consumed by fire
at the end of winter,

45 Drupada's soldiers were consumed by Bhīṣma.
Bhīṣma stood on the field,
like a fiercely blazing
smokeless flame,

46 Like the sun at noon,
reducing to ashes all round him.
The Pāṇḍavas did not even dare to look
at his dazzle.

47 Shivering with fear, the Pāṇḍava soldiers
looked around helplessly,
like a herd of cattle
stricken with extreme cold.

48 Harassed by the arrows of Gāṇgeya-Bhīṣma,
the white-uniformed soldiers of Yudhiṣṭhira
scattered like white cows
before a lion.

49 There was a mahā-slaughter of soldiers
on the battlefield, O Bharata,
and the Pāṇḍavas, retreating, kept wailing
"Hai! Hai!"

50 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma, pulling his bow
to a maṇḍala-circle,
kept shooting a stream
of snake-like venomous arrows.

51 O Bharata! The arrows flew in all directions
with deadly accuracy,
one by one decimating the chariot-heroes
of the Pāṇḍavas.

52 The Pāṇḍavas were crushed and humiliated;
beaten on the battlefield.
The sun set, night came,
and nothing was visible.

53 O bull-brave Bharata!
Bhīṣma stood inviolable and alone
on the mahā-battlefield,
while the Pāṇḍavas slowly retreated.

SECTION FIFTY

1 O bull-brave Bharata (continued Sañjaya),
after his armies' withdrawal
on the first day, and Duryodhana's delight
seeing Bhīṣma infuriated,

2 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira went to Janārdana-Krishna,
accompanied
by all his brothers and all the kings
who were his allies.

3 O rājā! He was deeply upset by his defeat
and by the glory of Bhīṣma,
so he said to the chief of the Vṛṣṇis
Krishna:

4 "Krishna, look at the terrible and powerful
mahā-archer Bhīṣma –
his arrows consume my soldiers
as flames consume dry grass in summer.

5 That mahātmā consumes my soldiers
as fire consumes ghee.
How will we ever dare to look him
in the face?

6 When they see that bow-armed,
mahā-powerful tiger-among-men,
my soldiers, afraid of his arrows,
flee in all directions.

7 Wrathful Yama, thunderbolt-wielding Indra,
noose-holding Varuṇa,
and mace-brandishing Kubera
can be defeated in battle,

8 But mahā-radiant and mahā-powerful Bhīṣma
cannot be defeated.
That is why I seem to be boatless
on a Bhīṣma-ocean.

9 O Keśava-Krishna, my mind and ātman
feel faint.
Bhīṣma is my foe; it is better, Varṣṇeya-Krishna,
that I retire to the forest.

10 It is not right to sacrifice these earth-rulers
to Bhīṣma-death.
Krishna, with his knowledge of mahā-weapons,
he can annihiliate my army.

11 Like insects rushing to perish
in a fierce fire,
my soldiers rush to perish
in this battle.

12 Vārṣṇeya-Krishna, battling for my kingdom,
I perish, slowly.
For my sake, my brave brothers
are arrow-wounded.

13 They suffer for their eldest brother,
their kingdom is lost.
Life is priceless – and now,
it seems so utterly useless.

14 I will spend the rest of my life
practising tapasyā.
I will not be responsible, Keśava-Krishna,
for butchering my friends.

15 Mahā-powerful Bhīṣma has killed,
with super-weapons,
thousands of my finest and bravest
chariot-heroes.

16 Tell me, Mādhava-Krishna, what is good for me.
What do I do now?
It seems to me Savyasācī-Arjuna is no more
than an uninvolved spectator.

17 Mahā-bodied Bhīṣma alone is full
of Kṣatriya dharma –
he alone seems to be fighting
with full strength and conviction.

18 With his hero-annihilating mace,
mahā-minded Bhīma is valiant
in combats with soldiers, horses,
chariots and elephants.

19 But, O respect-worthy Krishna,
Bhīma, at the present rate,
will take one hundred years to destroy
the enemy soldiers.

20 Only your loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friend Arjuna
is skilled in all weapons;
and he indifferently watches mahātmā Bhīṣma
and Droṇa destroying us.

[VI:50:21-29]

Transcreated by P. Lal

21 The super-weapons of mahātmā Bhīṣma
and Droṇa
seem to kill the Kṣatriyas not once
but over and over again.

22 O Krishna! It seems to me that Bhīṣma,
in his wrath,
with the earth-lords helping him,
will annihilate us.

23 O Lord of Yoga, O mahā-fortune-favoured Yogeśvara!
Suggest a mahā-chariot-hero
to quell Bhīṣma's wrath, as rain-filled clouds
extinguish a forest fire.

24 Your grace, Govinda-Krishna, will enable the Pāṇḍavas
to recover their kingdom
after killing their enemies. They will then rejoice
with their kinsmen."

25 Saying this, mahā-minded Pārtha-Yudhiṣṭhira
was struck by despair
and stood completely silent,
as if thinking to himself.
Seeing him sorrow-stricken
and filled with anguish,

26 Govinda-Krishna said these words,
delighting all present:
"O incomparable Bharata!
Do not grieve! Do not grieve,

27 Because your brothers are heroes,
they are world-celebrated bowmen.
I am on your side, O rājā, your wellwisher.
Also, mahā-famous Sātyaki,

28 Virāṭa, Drupada, and Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
who is Pṛṣata's decendant.
O excellent rājā, all these rājās,
with their armies,

29 Are your *bhaktas*, O lord of the world.
Their grace will favour you.
Pṛṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna is determined to help you
with loving valour.

30 He is the general of your army,
and obeys your instructions.
O mahā-powerful one, it is certain
Śikhaṇḍin will kill Bhīṣma.

31 There is no doubt this will happen
in front of all these kings."
Having heard this, rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
in Vāsudeva-Krishna's presence,
said to the mahā-chariot-hero,
brave Dhṛṣṭadyumna:

32 "Respectworthy Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
listen carefully to my words.
Do not on any account underestimate
their importance.

33 You are our general, as illustrious
as Vāsudeva-Krishna himself.
Just as, in the past,
Kārtikeya led the armies of the gods,

34 You command the forces of the Pāṇḍavas,
O bull-brave hero."
Hearing these words, all the earth-lords
and mahā-chariot-heroes

35 Exclaimed "*Sādhu*! *Sādhu!* Excellent!"
and pondered their meaning.
Then rājā Yudhiṣṭhira said
to mahā-powerful Dhṛṣṭadyumna:

36 "O tiger-among-men, show your mettle,
and kill the Kauravas.
I will follow you, Bhīma, and Krishna;
I assure you,

37 Mādrī's sons, and the armour-clad sons
of Draupadī
and all the lords of the earth
will also follow you."

38 Inspiring all who listened to him,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna said:
"I was ordained by Śambhu-Śiva
to be the slayer of Droṇa.
Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Droṇa, Śalya, Jayadratha –
on the battlefield

39 Today I will fight them
and other proud earth-lords."
Hearing this, the valiant and aggressive
Pāṇḍava mahā-archers

40 Applauded the courage of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
the foe-subduer;
the invincible warriors raised a chorus
of approval.

41 Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira said
to Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna:
"When the gods fought the anti-gods,
Bṛhaspati suggested to them
the undefeatable battle-formation
called the *krauñca*.

42 Try out that foe-annihilating *vyūha* now
on the battlefield.
Let the rājās see today
that never-before-witnessed tactic."

43 Advised by that god-among-mortals
as Viṣṇu is advised
by thunderbolt-wielding Indra,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, copying the strategy
of Bṛhaspati, next morning placed Arjuna
at the armies' head.

44 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's beautiful banner fluttered
high in the sky –
a banner fashioned by Viśvakarman
at Puruhūta-Indra's orders.

45 It had the enchanting radiance
of rainbow-colours;
it flew as sky-rangers fly;
it shone like a gandharva city.

46 It seemed to dance alongside the chariot
of Pārtha-Arjuna.
That gem-embroidered banner gave Arjuna
and his Gāṇḍīva-glowing chariot

47 A dazzling lustre, like that of Meru
lit by the sun.
O rājā! Drupada, surrounded
by an enormous force,

48 Was the army's head, Kuntibhoja and Dhṛṣṭaketu
being the two eyes.
The lords of Dāśārṇa, of Prabhadraka,
and of Daśaraka,

49 Of Anūpaka, and Kirāta
were the neck of the army.
The Paṭṭacaras, Pauṇḍras, and Pauravas,
O bull-brave Bharata rājā,

50 As well as the Niṣādas, with Yudhiṣṭhira,
formed its back.
Bhīma and Pṛṣata's descendant Dhṛṣṭadyumna
were the wings;

51 Draupadī's sons, Abhimanyu,
the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,
the Piśācas, Dāradas, the Pauṇḍras,
and the Kuṇḍīviṣas,

52 The Mārutas, Dhenukas, the Taṅganas
and the Parataṅganas, O Bharata,
the Bāhlīkas, Tittiras, the Colas
and the Pāṇḍyas –

53 These defended the right wing
of the battle formation.
The Aniveśyas, Huṇḍas, the Mālavas,
the Dānabhāris,

54 The Śabaras, Udbhasas, Vatsas,
and the forces of Nakula,
and Nakula and Sahadeva defended
the army's left wing.

55 At the wing-joints
were ten thousand chariot-warriors;
the head was defended
by one hundred thousand;

56 The front by one crore, and the back
by one hundred and seventy thousand.
The wings, the joints,
their extremities,

57 Were protected by numerous elephants
looking like radiant mountains, O rājā.
The rear was guarded by Virāṭa
and the Kekayas,

58 By the rājā of Kāśī, by Śaibya,
with thirty thousand chariots.
The mahā-*vyūha* of the Pāṇḍavas,
O Bharata,

59 Waited for sunrise;
it was equipped with heavy armour.
The bright, white, expensive umbrellas,
sun-brilliant,
shone on the backs of elephants
and on war-chariots.

SECTION FIFTY-ONE

1 Seeing the massive, mahā-terrifying *krauñca*
battle formation
(continued Sañjaya) of radiant Arjuna,
your son Duryodhana

2 Approached ācārya Droṇa, Kṛpa, Śalya,
Somadatta's son,
Vikarṇa, the great hero Aśvatthāman –
Droṇa's son –

3 And all his brothers led by Duḥśāsana,
ready for battle,
as well as many other formidable warriors,
O Bharata,

4 And he spoke to them these appropriate
and inspiring words:
"You have remarkable weapons,
you know how to use them.

5 Each of you alone, O mahā-chariot-heroes,
can annihiliate
all the Pāṇḍava armies.
Together, it will be all too easy.

6 Our ranks, led by Bhīṣma,
are impossible even to count;
theirs, led by Bhīma,
are limited in number.

7 The Saṁsthānas, Śūrasenas, Vetrikas, Kukuras,
Ārocakas, Trigartas, Madrakas, Yavanas,

8 With Śatruṁjaya and Duḥśāsana,
With brave Vikarṇa, and Nanda and Upananda,

9 With Citrasena and the Pāribhadraka heroes –
Let them form ranks to protect Bhīṣma."

10 Hearing these words of Duryodhana
(said Sañjaya)
Droṇa and the other mahā-chariot-heroes said,
"It will be done."

11 Immediately, O respectworthy monarch,
Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and your sons
manoeuvred their troops into a mahā-formation
to fight the Pāṇḍavas.

12 Like the rājā of gods, Indra,
Bhīṣma advanced,
guarded by mighty heroes
and leading a mighty army.

13 O lord of the world,
the son of Bharadvāja, mighty Droṇa,
followed by a host of Kuntalas,
Daśārṇas, Māgadhas,

14 Vidarbhas, Mekalas, Karṇaprāvarṇas,
And other soldiers flanked powerful Bhīṣma,

15 Along with warriors from Gāndhāra, Sindhu,
Sauvīra and Śibi.
Śakuni and his army
also protected Bharadvāja's son.

16 Rājā Duryodhana and all his brave brothers,
Followed by warriors from Aśvātaka, Vikarṇa,
Ambaṣṭha, Kosala,

17 Darada, Śaka, Kṣudraka, Mālava
And other lands advanced confidently against the
Pāṇḍavas.

18 Bhūriśravas, Śala, Śalya, respectworthy Bhagadatta,
Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti protected the left
flank.

19 Somadatta's son, Suśarman, Kāmboja's ruler Sudakṣiṇa,
And Śrutayu and Acyutāyu protected the right.

20 Aśvatthāman, Kṛpa, and Kṛtavarman of the Sātvatas,
Protected the rear with a massive army.

21 Reinforcing them were other lords of men –
Ketumān, Vasudāna, and the Kāśī prince Abhibhū.

22 Confident and eager for battle, the warriors,
O Bharata,
blew their conches and growled, like lions
on the hunt.

23 Their fierce shouts made Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
roar like a lion,
and he also blew horripilatingly
on his conch.

24 A deafening and tumultuous cacophony
was produced
on the battlefield by the conches, drums,
cymbals and bells.

25 Riding a chariot pulled by white horses,
Krishna and Arjuna
also blew their magnificent bejewelled
golden conches.

26 Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna blew his conch, the Pāñcajanya;
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna his conch, the Devadatta;
and Vṛkodara-Bhīma his mahā-conch,
the Pauṇḍra.

27 Kuntī's son rājā Yudhiṣṭhira blew his conch,
the Anantavijaya,
Nakula blew the Sughoṣa,
and Sahadeva the Maṇipuṣpaka.

28 The rājā of Kāśī, Śaibya, the mahā-chariot-hero
Śikhaṇḍin,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa, the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,

29 The mahā-archer king of Pāñcāla, the five sons of
Draupadī –
All blew mahā-conches and roared like lions.

30 The tremendous martial din
produced by the heroes
reverberated in the sky,
and seemed to shatter it.

31 And so, mahārāja,
the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas,
arrayed and eager for battle,
advanced to the field.

SECTION FIFTY-TWO

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"What was the first tactic of Bhīṣma
after my armies and my enemies' armies
began advancing?"

2 Let me describe to you (replied Sañjaya),
how your soldiers
and the Pāṇḍavas clashed. Lined in formation,
the armour-clad troops
stood on the field of Kurukṣetra,
battle-flags fluttering.

3 Your son Duryodhana, standing in the centre
of the ocean-vast army, O rājā,
said: "You have put on your armour.
Let the battle begin!"

4 The soldiers, reckless of life
and filled with cruel thoughts,
advanced against the Pāṇḍavas
with flags flying.

5 In the horripilating tumultuous battle
that ensued,
chariots and elephants were lost
in the confusion.

6 Deadly-sharp arrows with exquisite feathers
were shot by chariot-heroes
in the thick ranks of horses
and elephants.

7 And so, with the start of hostilities,
mahā-muscled and mahā-valiant Bhīṣma
buckled his armour,
lifted his bow,

8 And on Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu, on Bhīma,
on the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,
on Kekaya, Virāṭa, and on Drupada's son,
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

9 On the bravest of the Cedi
and the Matsya warriors,
the venerable Kaurava Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
showered sharp arrows.

10 The Pāṇḍava battle-formation trembled
under the impact of that attack.
A mahā-clash decimated
both armies.

11 Horse-warriors and horses and chariot-warriors
fought and fell.
The chariot-ranks of the Pāṇḍavas reeled,
and many fled.

12 Seeing this, tiger-among-men Arjuna
was infuriated
and said to Vārṣṇeya-Krishna,
"Drive me to the mahā-chariot-hero Pitāmaha.

13 He is loyal to Duryodhana and, Vārṣṇeya-Krishna,
at this rate,
his rage will lead to the extermination
of our soldiers.

14 I feel, Janārdana-Krishna, that Droṇa, Kṛpa,
Śalya, Vikarṇa,
and the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
protected by Bhīṣma's

15 Magnificent bowmanship,
will wipe out the Pāñcālas.
Janārdana-Krishna, before that happens,
let me kill Bhīṣma and save our army."

16 Vāsudeva-Krishna replied: "I will drive you
to the chariot of your Pitāmaha.
But, Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
you must be careful."

17 With these words, Śauri-Krishna drove
the world-famed chariot
and stopped it, O lord of men,
alongside Bhīṣma's chariot.

18 Innumerable flags fluttering,
and horses gracefully galloping
like a flight of cranes,
his war-banner raised high,

19 The ape-symbol in his banner screaming,
Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
cut through the ranks
of the Kauravas and Śūrasenas,

20 His chariot-wheels thundering. Pleasing his friends,
he charged at Bhīṣma
with the ferocity of a huge elephant
running amok.

21 Protected by the soldiers of Sindhu,
the eastern troops,
and the Kekaya warriors,
and confident of winning,

22 Bhīṣma, the son of Śāntanu,
withstood the attack of Arjuna.
Who but the Kuru grandsire
would dare face the Gāṇḍīva,

23 Who but he and Droṇa and Vikartana's son,
brave Karṇa?
Bhīṣma, the mahā-chariot-hero of all the worlds,
mahārāja,

24 Shot seventyseven arrows at Arjuna;
Droṇa shot twentyfive,
and Kṛpa shot fifty *nārāca*-arrows
at Arjuna,

25 Duryodhana shot sixtyfour, Śalya nine,
Jayadratha nine, Śakuni five,

26 Vikarṇa shot ten broad-headed arrows, O rājā.
Harassed by the sharp arrows, Pāṇḍu's son,

27 Mahā-muscled Arjuna, remained mountain-firm.
Bhīṣma with twentyfive arrows, Kṛpa with nine,

28 Droṇa with sixty, Vikarṇa with three,
Śalya with three, Duryodhana with five –

29 Is how diadem-decked Kirīṭin-Arjuna fought back.
O bull-brave Bharata! Sātyaki, Virāṭa, Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

30 Draupadī's sons, and Abhimanyu guarded
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Droṇa, eager to defeat Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma,

31 Was attacked by Dhṛṣṭadyumna and his Somaka troops.
O rājā! The chariot-hero Bhīṣma succeeded in
wounding Arjuna

32 With eighty sharp arrows. The soldiers applauded.
Hearing the noisy joy of the soldiers,

33 The lion-among-men Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Once again launched himself into the fray.

34 O rājā! He played, as it were, with his bow, shooting
With casual ease. Rājā Duryodhana, seeing his soldiers

35 Hemmed in by the skill of Pārtha-Arjuna, said:
"Pāṇḍu's son, with the help of Krishna,

36 Threatens the very roots of our existence.
Our troops die,
though you, Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma and Droṇa,
both survive.

37 O lord of the world! You are the cause of Karṇa
refusing to take up arms
against Pārtha-Arjuna,
though Karṇa seeks my welfare.

38 Son of Gaṅgā, Gāṅgeya, do something!
Kill Phālguna-Arjuna!"
O rājā! Hearing this,
your father Devavrata-Bhīṣma said:

39 "*Dhik!* Shame on the dharma of Kṣatriyas!"
He sped his chariot towards Arjuna,
Both the chariots had white horses,
O rājā.

40 The chiefs roared like lions and blew their conches
as the chariots rushed at each other.
O respectworthy monarch,
your son, Aśvatthāman, and Vikarṇa

41 Manoeuvred to protect Bhīṣma in the clash.
O respectworthy monarch,
the Pāṇḍavas manoeuvred similarly
to protect Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

42 In that fierce encounter
between two fierce warriors,
the son of Gaṅgā, Bhīṣma,
wounded Arjuna with nine arrows,

43 And Arjuna countered with a volley
of ten arrows.
Then Arjuna, O respectworthy monarch,
shooting a thousand arrows,

44 Encircled Bhīṣma, as it were,
giving him no quarter;
but that arrow-net,
met by another arrow-net

45 Shot by Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma,
was instantly neutralised.
Both excellent warriors delightedly
fought each other,

46 Equally matched in war-skills,
neither scoring any advantage.
When Bhīṣma fired a net of arrows
at Arjuna,

47 Arjuna immediately repulsed them
with a counter-net;
similarly, the shower of arrows
fired by Arjuna

48 Was shattered to pieces that lay scattered
on the battleground.
Arjuna harassed Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma
with another twentyfive arrows,

49 And Bhīṣma replied with a fierce volley
of fresh arrows.
Both these super-mahā-powerful heroes
on the battlefield,

50 Foe-slaying heroes, sliced each other's flagstaffs,
smashed each other's chariot-wheels
as if playing a game, until, mahārāja,
Bhīṣma, unrivalled in offensive warfare,

51 Shot three arrows that struck Vāsudeva-Krishna
in the chest.
Hit squarely by these well-aimed arrows
of Bhīṣma, Madhusūdana-

52 Krishna bled like the crimson flowers
of a *kiṁśuka* tree.
O rājā! The sight of Mādhava-Krishna wounded
enraged Arjuna,

53 And he succeeded in wounding the charioteer
of the Kuru patriarch.
The two heroes kept manoeuvring
to kill each other,

54 Weaving strategic maṇḍala-patterns
around each other's chariots,
cleverly retreating and advancing
to confuse each other.

55 These tactics were adopted to get
better shooting positions,
each waiting for an opening,
each alert and confident.

56 And as they slipped in and out
of different striking positions,
they blew fiercely on their conches
and roared like lions.

57 The combined cacophony,
mixing with the twang of bow-strings
and the rattle of the war-chariots
madly speeding,

58 Seemed to tear apart the earth;
indeed, the earth shuddered,
underground rumblings were heard;
meanwhile, the two heroes

59 Fought on. Impossible to make out
who was superior.
Only Bhīṣma's flag could be seen clearly
by the Kauravas,

60 Only Arjuna's flag could be seen clearly
by the Pāṇḍavas.
Watching the incredible display
of skill and strength,

61 All the soldiers on the battlefield, O Bharata,
were spellbound –
all felt that this was a duel
between perfect equals,

62 Each as defectless
as a person stable in dharma.
Their arrow-showers made both of them
fully invisible,

63 Becoming visible only when the arrows
collided and fell.
The gods, gandharvas, Cāraṇas,
and all the ṛṣis

64 Were rapt seeing their exploits on the field,
and exclaimed:
"Flushed with battle-fervour,
these heroes cannot be defeated

65 Even by gods, anti-gods, and gandharvas
of all the worlds;
they are mahā-chariot-heroes;
their clash is truly incomparable.

66 Never again will such a battle be fought.
Brave Bhīṣma
cannot be defeated
by brilliantly expert Pārtha-Arjuna

67 Regardless of how many arrows he shoots
at Bhīṣma's bow, chariot, and horses.
Arjuna, undefeated
by even the gods –

68 How can Bhīṣma ever hope
to vanquish that bow-wielder?
The duel will continue
as long as the world lasts."

69 O lord of the earth,
we heard this magnificent praise
of the son of Gaṅgā
and the son of Kuntī.

70 O Bharata! Even as Bhīṣma and Arjuna
fought each other,
your soldiers and the Pāṇḍava soldiers
killed each other.

71 Using sharp lances and battle-axes
and variegated arrows,
using all conceivable kinds
of weapons of combat,

72 The two armies battled furiously.
O rājā!
Even as this clash went on
in one part of the field,
in another ensued a mahā-gory clash
between Droṇa and Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

SECTION FIFTY-THREE

1 "Tell me, Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"about the duel
that took place between Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and the mahā-bowman Droṇa.

2 If even Bhīṣma could not escape
Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
on the battlefield,
what else is it but fate?

3 Bhīṣma, angered, could annihilate all
moving and unmoving creatures.
Sañjaya, how is it then
that Arjuna entrapped him?"

4 I will tell you, rājā (said Sañjaya),
about this horrific clash.
Even the gods, led by Vāsava-Indra,
cannot harm Arjuna.

5 Shooting a multiplicity of *bhalla*-arrows,
Droṇa pinned down Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and incapacitated his chariot
and charioteer.

6 With four excellently-aimed arrows,
Droṇa wounded
the four splendid horses of the chariot,
O respectworthy monarch.

7 Shouting "Wait! Wait!", Dhṛṣṭadyumna smiled
as he shot nine arrows
and succeeded in wounding
brave Droṇa.

8 The infinite-ātmaned son of Bharadvāja,
Droṇa, in turn
enveloped enraged Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with a shower of arrows.

9 Then he selected a terrifying arrow,
as powerful as Śakra-Indra's thunderbolt,
as unerring as Kāla's rod of doom,
to kill Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

10 O descendent of Bharata,
when the soldiers saw that arrow
aimed by Bharadvāja's son, they screamed
in mahā-unison "Hai! Hai!"

11 But Dhṛṣṭadyumna remained unshaken,
unbelievably calm, and brave;
he stood as firm as a mountain
on the field.

12 He pulverised the arrow
that sped towards him
like his own death, and harassed Bhāradvāja-Droṇa
with more arrows.

13 That incredible feat of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
filled the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas
with joy;
they exulted again and again.

14 With the concentrated motive of killing Droṇa,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna hurled
with mahā-velocity a *śakti*
studded with gold and lapis lazuli.

15 Droṇa smiled as he saw the *śakti*
speeding towards him,
and sliced the gold-and-gemmed missile
in three fragments.

16 O lord of men! Seeing his *śakti* neutralised,
valiant Dhṛṣṭadyumna
scattered a shower of arrows
on Droṇa.

17 But mahā-illustrious Droṇa, not outdone,
quickly repulsed the shower,
and retaliated by splintering
the bow of Drupada's son.

18 His bow shattered, valiant Dhṛṣṭadyumna
flung a hill-heavy mace,
made of iron,
in the direction of Droṇa.

19 The fearful mace arced across the sky,
aimed to kill Droṇa.
It was then we saw Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's
magnificent skill.

20 He blocked the dazzling gold-worked mace,
and simultaneously
he let loose at Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
some gold-winged arrows –

21 Ghastly, stone-sharpened *bhalla*-arrows,
gold-feathered arrows,
which pierced the armour of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
and sipped his blood.

22 The mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
unbewildered, lifted another bow,
and shot five arrows
fiercely at Droṇa.

23 These two bull-brave heroes,
drenched in blood, O rājā,
looked as beautiful as *kiṁśuka* trees
flowering in springtime.

24 But Droṇa remained supremely confident.
Once again, O rājā,
he succeeded in shattering the bow
of Drupada's son;

25 After which infinite-ātmaned Droṇa
shot knotted arrows
that fell on Dhṛṣṭadyumna
like monsoon showers.

26 With four special *bhalla*-arrows
he killed the four horses
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna's chariot,
and maimed the charioteer.

27 Then, on the battlefield,
he shouted leonine roars.
Another *bhalla*-arrow ripped Dhṛṣṭadyumna's
leather finger-guards.

28 His bow smashed, his chariot wrecked,
his horses killed,
his charioteer felled, with mahā-courage
brandishing a mace

29 Dhṛṣṭadyumna leapt out, O Bharata,
but before his feet touched the ground,
Droṇa pulverised his mace.
It was unbelievable!

30 Rippling-muscled Dhṛṣṭadyumna immediately
lifted a shield
embossed with a hundred moons,
and a massive sword.

31 He rushed at Droṇa with fierce speed,
determined to kill him,
like a ravening forest lion pouncing
on a rutting elephant.

32 O Bharata! Then we had a glimpse
of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's prowess –
his amazing nimbleness of hand,
his physical strength.

33 All he did was block Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with a volley of arrows.
Dhṛṣṭadyumna could come nowhere
near him.

34 Halted by that incessant arrow-shower,
the mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna
skilfully warded off the arrows
with his shield.

35 Mahā-muscled Bhīma, powerful Bhīma
then decided
it was time to give assistance
to mahā-ātmaned Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

36 He fired seven sharp arrows, O rājā,
and wounded Droṇa;
and, wheeling his chariot,
he picked up Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

37 O rājā! Duryodhana, troubled,
ordered Bhānumān to muster
a mahā-contingent of soldiers
to reinforce Bhāradvāja-Droṇa.

38 O lord of men, commanded by your son Duryodhana,
a formidable segment
from the kingdom of Kaliṅga
prepared to attack Bhīma.

39 The unrivalled chariot-hero Drona gave up fighting
prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and met the combined challenge
of elderly Virāṭa and Drupada.

40 Dhṛṣṭadyumna decided to reinforce
dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.
A tumultuous, horripilating clash
then took place

41 Between the Kaliṅga warriors
and mahātmā Bhīma –
a horrendous fearful encounter capable
of destroying the world.

SECTION FIFTY-FOUR

1 "Acting on orders from Duryodhana,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"how did the Kaliṅga ruler deploy his warriors
against mahā-powerful Bhīma?

2 If even Bhīṣma could not escape
Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
on the battlefield,
what else is it but fate?"

3 O Indra-among-rājās (replied Sañjaya),
the mahā-powerful ruler of Kaliṅga
advanced with his soldiers
towards Bhīma.

4 The enormous Kaliṅga army,
with its chariots, horses and elephants,
with diverse weapons of war,
headed,

5 O Bharata, by the brave prince Ketumān
of the Niṣādas,
was immediately attacked by Bhīma
with help from the Cedis.

6 This so angered armour-clad Śrutāyus
that he quickly
manoeuvred his soldiers to the aid
of rājā Ketumān.

7 The Kaliṅga ruler with thousands of chariots,
O ruler of men,
and Ketumān with ten thousand elephants
and Niṣādas,

8 Together ringed Bhīma.
It was then that the Cedis,
the Matsyas, and the Karūṣas,
led by Bhīma,

9 Together with many other rājās,
launched a concerted attack
on the Niṣādas. It was a gory,
fear-instilling encounter

10 Between the two opposing sides –
both bent on mutual annihilation.
A gruesome battle between Bhīma
and his enemies!

11 Mahārāja, it resembled the battle
between Indra and the Daitya antigods.
O Bharata!
That noisy clash

12 Was like the mahā-roaring of ocean-waves.
O lord of the world!
They shredded each other's bodies
till the field,

13 Strewn with mangled corpses,
resembled a cremation ground
streaming with blood.
They killed blindly both friend and foe.

14 Many soldiers indiscriminately slaughtered
their own friends.
It was a grisly carnage
between few and many,

15 The few Cedis and many Kaliṅgas and Niṣādas.
O lord of the world!
Demonstrating their martial skill,
the mahā-powerful

16 Cedis did their best,
but were forced to retreat,
abandoning Bhīma who by himself
faced the Kaliṅgas.

17 Pāṇḍava Bhīma relied on his own strength;
he did not retreat;
mahā-powerful Bhīma stood firmly ensconced
in his chariot,

18 And harassed the Kaliṅgas
with a hail of arrows.
Then the Kaliṅga ruler and his mahā-bowman
and mahā-chariot-hero son,

19 Śakradeva, fired ten arrows
at the Pāṇḍava Bhīma.
Mahā-muscled Bhīma only waved his bow,
and with conspicuous bravery

20 Stood his ground against the attack
of the Kaliṅga ruler.
Śakradeva, with an incessant hail
of arrows,

21 Succeeded in killing the chariot-steeds
of Bhīma.
Seeing the great smiter of foes Bhīmasena
thus unhorsed,

22 Mahā-powerful Śakradeva started shooting arrows
continuously at Bhīma,
rushing straight at Bhīma.
O Indra-among-rājās!

23 His arrows poured like blinding rain
after summer,
but could not dislodge mahā-powerful Bhīma
from his horseless chariot.

24 Indeed, Bhīma flung a heavy iron mace
at Śakradeva;
the impact of the blow, O rājā,
killed the Kaliṅga prince instantly.

25 The Kaliṅga ruler's son hurtled out
of his flag-shredded chariot.
Seeing his son drop dead,
the ruler of Kaliṅga

26 Encircled Bhīma with a mahā-array
of soldiers;
with mahā-swiftness Bhīma abandoned
his mahā-mace

27 And proceeded to show his fearful skill
with a large sword which,
O bull-brave rājā, he flourished
together with a bull-hide shield,

28 A shield decorated with gold stars
and half-moons.
Enraged, the Kaliṅga ruler caressed
his bow-string

29 And fitting a vicious snake-arrow
to his bow,
he fired it straight at Bhīma
with fatal strength.

30 Before the whistling poison-arrow
could strike him, O rājā,
Bhīma sliced it in mid-air
with his huge sword,

31 And guffawed such a laugh
that all his enemies trembled.
Further angered, the ruler of Kaliṅga
decided to pin Bhīma down

32 With fourteen stone-sharpened *tomara*-darts,
but mahā-muscled Pāṇḍava Bhīma
disintegrated these also
in mid-air.

33 Having pulverised those fourteen stone-headed
tomara-missiles,
O rājā, Bhīmasena decided to concentrate
his energies elsewhere

34 By launching a direct attack on Bhānumān,
who successfully defended himself
against the bull-brave warrior Bhīma
with an arrow-shower.

35 And Bhānumān roared with sky-shattering
stentorian resonance –
a lion-like mahā-growl
that grated on Bhīma.

36 Bhīma countered with an equally
shattering mahā-roar,
which spread alarm in the ranks
of the Kaliṅgas.

37 O bull-brave Bharata!
They were now convinced
Bhīma was no normal human being.
Still shouting, mahā-muscled Bhīma,

38 Brandishing his sword, ran towards the elephant,
and, O respectworthy monarch,
gripping one tusk, he swung himself
on to the elephant's back.

39 The Kaliṅga ruler desperately wielded
his *śakti*-lance,
but, with a single stroke,
Bhīma sliced him in two.

40 After killing the Kaliṅga prince,
foe-crushing Bhīma swept his sword up
and struck it
on the elephant's neck.

41 The severed head of the elephant
hit the ground
with a heavy thud, like the peak
of a water-rotted hill.

42 Sporting his armour, sword in hand,
O Bharata descendant,
Bhīma leapt nimbly off the elephant
onto the ground.

43 Bhīma roamed at will
on the field of battle,
like a whirlpool wheel
of intolerable fiery doom.

44 Clad in armour, waving his sword,
he roamed at will,
slicing elephants, horses, chariots, and soldiers
in a bloody orgy.

45 Mahā-powerful Bhīma cleaved his way
through the ranks
of the clustered soldiers
like a hawk swooping through the sky.

46 On that field of battle
he singly spread terror
with his sharp sword
and the fury of his wrath.

47 He was like Kāla, like Yāma, like Antāka
the end of the world.
Confounded, his enemies delivered themselves
into his hands.

48 Scattering his enemies right and left
with his sword in that mahā-clash,
he severed the shafts and yokes
of their chariots,

49 And he killed them mercilessly.
What incredible feats of swordsmanship
were displayed
on that battlefield, –

50 The quick-wheel, the top-whirl,
the side-thrust,
the jump-forward, the head-plunge,
and many others!

51 So many elephants were wounded
by that mahātmā Pāṇḍava –
mangled and bleeding, they screamed,
and dropped dead.

52 Some had their trunks and tusks lopped off,
other had their front globes sliced open;
they trumpeted in mortal agony,
O Bharata!

53 Some lumbered helter-skelter for safety.
O rājā!
Splintered lances,
heads of many elephant-drivers,

54 Exquisitely-worked elephant caparisons,
golden cords,
collars, darts, hooks, missiles, flags,
and *śaktis*,

55 All kinds of war contraptions
with mechanical devices,
beautiful bows, polished screws,
and golden buckles,

56 Various kinds of bells, O rājā,
and other glittering apparatus –
all these could be seen littering
the battlefield.

57 There were mutilated elephants trumpeting,
some with fore parts sliced off,
some with hind parts –
crushed like crumbled cliffs.

58 Mahā-powerful Bhīma,
after slaughtering mahā-elephants,
began a systematic butchery
of cavalry and chariot-horses.

59 O Bharata! It was a sheer horror
to see him at his task.
One by one, hilts, golden saddles,
shining reins,

60 And other equestrian panoply,
mahā-expensive swords,
dazzling armours,
and shields of many kinds

61 Could be seen scattered in all parts
of the mahā-battlefield.
Such a variety of colourful paraphernalia
lay strewn there,

62 It seemed that the field
was a lake full of flowers.
Mahā-powerful Bhīma kept leaping up,
dragging down chariot-heroes

63 And killing them with his sword,
and toppling their flag-staffs.
Illustrious Bhīma jumped and ran so fast
that soldiers,

64 Watching him, were spellbound.
Some he kicked
or pummelled to death,
others he dashed to pulp;

65 Some he cut down;
others, terrified by the noise
of his roars and shouts,
fled for their lives;

66 Still others, seeing him,
died of shock and fright.
Undaunted, the Kaliṅga soldiers
re-grouped

67 And, with the aim of protecting Bhīṣma,
encircled Bhīma.
O bull-brave Bharata, seeing,
at the head of the Kaliṅga army,

68 Śrutāyus himself,
Bhīma decided to attack him.
Seeing him advancing, the Kaliṅga prince
with nine arrows

69 Wounded Bhīma, striking him
straight in his chest.
The arrows pierced him as a hook
injures an elephant,

70 Adding fuel to the blazing fire
of Bhīma's wrath.
Immediately Aśoka drove up
in a gold-decorated chariot,

71 And Kaunteya-Bhīma quickly jumped into it.
The foe-chastising son of Kuntī, Bhīma,
taking advantage
of the chariot,

72 Sped towards the Kaliṅga prince,
shouting "Wait! Wait!"
Mighty Śrutāyus,
angered by Bhīma's surprise tactic,

73 With amazing dexterity blocked Bhīma
with sharp arrows.
Afflicted by those nine
excellently aimed arrows

74 Shot by the mahā-ātmaned ruler
of Kaliṅga,
Bhīma flared up, O mahārāja,
like a snake hit with a stick.

75 Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Bhīma
pulled his bow fully taut,
and killed the Kaliṅga prince
with seven iron shafts.

76 With two *kṣura* razor-arrows he despatched
the Kaliṅga ruler's two
mahā-powerful chariot protectors Satyadeva and Satya
to Yama's realm.

77 Bhīma, with infinite ātman-power,
with three *nārāca*-arrows
next despatched Ketumān
to Yama's realm.

78 But the Kṣatriyas of Kaliṅga,
reinforced by thousands
of specially trained soldiers,
again attacked infuriated Bhīma.

79 Hundreds and thousands of Kaliṅgas,
O rājā,
with *śaktis*, maces, swords, spears, and axes,
surrounded Bhīma.

80 In the gory battle that ensued,
armed with mace,
and jumping out of his speeding chariot,
mahā-powerful

81 Bhīma sent seven hundred brave soldiers
to Yama's realm,
after which two thousand other
Kaliṅga warriors

82 Were despatched to the land of the dead.
It seemed
there was no limit to the Kaliṅgas
whom again and again

83 He butchered in the very presence
of the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma.
Many elephants were slaughtered by Bhīma
in that clash.

84 Some elephants ran amok,
scattering the ranks of both
Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, trumpeting in terror,
pierced by arrows.

85 Mahā-muscled Bhīma, sword in hand,
lifted a conch
and joyfully blew on it
a maha-peal of victory.

86 The resounding peal made the Kaliṅgas
tremble in fear;
they stood there, O foe-chastiser,
as if paralysed.

87 O rājā! The sight of Bhīma
traversing the field of battle
like a mad elephant,
travelling where he willed,

88 Jumping in a fury
of uncontrollable war ecstasy,
made the Kaliṅgas stand awe-struck
in petrified stupor.

89 The swelling ranks of the Kaliṅgas trembled,
like the waters
of a mahā water-body
agitated by creature-commotion.

90 Terrified into panic
by the wondrous warrior Bhīma,
fleeing in all directions
as best as they could,

91 The Kaliṅgas rallied briefly again.
As they did so,
the Pāṇḍava leader Dhṛṣṭadyumna
ordered his troops, "Attack!"

92 Acting on his command,
many warriors led by Śikhaṇḍin,
supported by chariot-heroes,
advanced to reinforce Bhīma.

93 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Pāṇḍu,
followed them
with a host of mahā-elephants
with cloud-dark hides.

94 Encouraging his soldiers, Pṛṣata's son
prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
went to Bhīma's aid
with a specially trained contingent.

95 Dhṛṣṭadyumna, rājā of Pāñcāla,
held none
in this world dearer
than Sātyaki and Bhīma.

96 Hero-killing foe-smiting Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
saw mahā-muscled Bhīma
fighting alone,
encircled by Kaliṅga soldiers.

97 Seeing him, foe-crushing Dhṛṣṭadyumna
joyfully screamed his war-cry;
he shouted more lion-roars, O rājā,
and blew his conch,

98 And Bhīma was encouraged too,
seeing the pigeon-white horses
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna's golden chariot,
and his ebony tree-symbolled flag.

99 Infinite-ātmaned Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
seeing Bhīma harassed
by the Kaliṅga soldiers,
sped to his rescue.

100 They saw Sātyaki approaching from a distance,
and, with fresh confidence,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Vṛkodara-Bhīma renewed
attacking the Kaliṅgas.

101 Bull-brave Sātyaki, descendant of Śini,
of victorious heroes the bravest,
reached the spot, and reinforced
both Bhīma and Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

102 Bow in hand, he spread havoc
in the Kaliṅga ranks;
he was a fierce figure inspiring
elemental terror.

103 And Bhīma created a river of blood
on the field –
in which floated the flesh and marrow
of the Kaliṅgas –

104 But mahā-powerful Bhīma was able to cross
those crimson waters
that flowed through the ranks
of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas.

105 O king, seeing Bhīmasena
in that spectacular shape,
the soldiers muttered, "All-killing Kāla has come
to kill the Kaliṅgas."

106 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma heard the cries
of the soldiers
and, with a host of warriors,
attacked Pāṇḍava Bhīma,

107 Which provoked the concerted counter-attack
on the golden chariot of Bhīṣma
by Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Sātyaki,
and Bhīma.

108 They encircled Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma in no time.
Without wasting a moment,
each wounded Bhīṣma
with three arrows.

109 You *pitā*, Devavrata-Bhīṣma,
replied
with three arrows of his own,
wounding all three mahā-bowmen.

110 Next he repulsed the three mahā-chariot-heroes
with hundreds of arrows
and targeted and killed
Bhīma's gold-caparisoned horses.

111 But valiant Bhīma remained firm
in his horseless chariot,
and released a *śakti*-missile at Bhīṣma,
with enormous force.

112 Your *pitā*, Devavrata-Bhīṣma,
splintered the *śakti* in mid-air;
its minuscule fragments scattered
on the battlefield.

113 O bull-brave lord! Brave Bhīma picked up
a mace of Śaikya-iron
and quickly jumped
out of his useless chariot.

114 In order to please Bhīma,
brave Sātyaki shot arrows
that fatally struck down
the charioteer of Bhīṣma.

115 With his charioteer dead,
finest of chariot-heroes Bhīṣma
was whisked away from the field
by wind-swift horses.

116 O rājā! Seeing mahā-vowed Bhīṣma leave
the field of battle,
Bhīma flared up like a fire feeding
on dry grass.

118 Finest of chariot-heroes Dhṛṣṭadyumna saw Bhīma
jump out, raced his chariot alongside,
and picked up illustrious Bhīma
while everyone watched.

119 The Pāñcālas and Matsyas pūjā-praised Bhīma,
O bull-brave Bharata,
and Bhīma embraced the two heroes
Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Sātyaki.

120 Truly illustrious Sātyaki, lion-brave Yādava,
said to Bhīma
happily in the presence
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna:

121 "We are fate-favoured –
you have killed the ruler of Kaliṅga,
prince Ketumān, Śakradeva,
and all the other Kaliṅgas.

122 Thousands of mahā-warriors,
countless chariots,
thousands of elephant and horses –
by the valour of your arms –

123 The mahā-Kaliṅga army has been wiped out
singly by you."
Saying this, O chastiser of your enemies,
long-armed Sātyaki

124 Quickly alighted from his chariot
and embraced Bhīma.
Soon after, the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki
angrily recommenced
the slaughter of his enemies
on the battlefield.

SECTION FIFTY-FIVE

1 O descendant of Bharata (continued Sañjaya),
that day passed;
the mahā-destruction of chariots, horses,
elephants and soldiers went on;

2 The Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna battled
with the three mahā-chariot-heroes:
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Śalya, and mahā-atmaned Kṛpa.

3 Mahā-ātmaned Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
the Pāñcāla prince,
killed the world-famous horses of Aśvatthāman
with ten sharp arrows.

4 Horseless Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman
stepped into Śalya's chariot
from whose vantage he rained arrows
on Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

5 O Bharata! Seeing Dhṛṣṭadyumna engaged in duel
with Aśvatthāman,
Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
fired his sharp arrows.

6 Bull-brave Abhimanyu harassed Śalya
with twentyfive arrows,
Kṛpa with nine,
and Aśvatthāman with eight.

7 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman pinned down
Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
with a single arrow;
Śalya fired ten sharp arrows,
and Aśvatthāman three,
at Abhimanyu.

8 Your grandson Lakṣmaṇa charged
towards Subhadrā's son,
and there followed
a long and fierce fascinating duel.

9 A wonderful duel, O rājā,
in which Duryodhana's son
angrily cornered Subhadrā's son
with his arrows.

10 Equally incensed, O bull-brave rājā,
agile Abhimanyu
replied with fifty arrows fired
at his cousin-brother.

11 Mahārāja! Lakṣmaṇa countered
with an arrow volley
that sliced Abhimanyu's bow.
The soldiers cheered.

12 The exterminator-of-heroic-enemies
Abhimanyu flung aside
his splintered bow, and lifted another stronger
and more elegant.

13 Those two superbly skilful warriors
began a duel
in which each bull-brave hero
wounded the other.

14 Seeing his mahā-chariot-hero son under attack
from your grandson Abhimanyu,
lord-of-people rājā Duryodhana
raced to the spot.

15 As soon as he reached there,
many Kaurava leaders
surrounded Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
with their chariots.

16 O rājā! Abhimanyu's valour
was like Krishna's:
he remained completely unruffled,
though heavily outnumbered.

17 Seeing Subhadrā's son engaged
in an unequal battle,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, agitated, hurried there,
intent on rescuing him.

18 Immediately the Kaurava rājās,
led by Bhīṣma and Droṇa,
rushed with elephants, horses and chariots
to intercept Arjuna.

19 A billowing cloud of dust,
raised by soldiers,
by horses, chariots and elephants,
soon blotted the sky.

20 When the hundreds of elephants
and thousands of soldiers
came within arrow-shot of Arjuna,
they halted;

21 The soldiers shouted,
unable to see in the dusty dark.
The Kaurava army presented
a harrowing sight.

22 Nothing was visible, O incomparable Bharata –
not the eight directions, not sun, not earth –
so thick was the shower
of Kirīṭin-Arjuna's arrows.

23 Many elephants perished,
many chariot-heroes lost their horses.
Chariotless, they wandered forlorn
on the battlefield.

24 Other chariotless heroes were seen
aimlessly roaming about
with war-weapons clutched
in *aṅgada*-decorated hands.

25 Spurring their horses and goading their elephants
in fear of Arjuna,
O rājā, the Kaurava ranks scattered
in confusion.

26 Slicing mercilessly the upraised arms
of soldiers
with maces, swords, quivers, arrows and hooks
in their hands,

27 Cutting down flagstaffs and banners,
Arjuna, O lord of the world,
was a terrifying figure of indiscriminate,
ubiquitous destruction.

28 Disintegrated spiked maces, mallets, feathered darts,
short arrows, swords;

29 Sharp axes, lances, shattered shields, *parigha*-lances,
bhindipālas, flagstaffs; O respectworthy monarch,

30 Iron hooks, elephant goads, whips, *tomara*-lances,
golden umbrellas, *paraśva*-axes, O earth-lord Bharata,

31 War pennants, shields, golden staffs,
leather-protectors, *tomara*-weapons, O Bharata . . .

32 There was not one man in your army,
O respectworthy monarch,
who dared to face Arjuna in battle
at that time.

33 Anyone who had the courage to attack Arjuna,
O Bharata,
was promptly despatched by him
to the other world.

34 After your soldiers broke ranks
and confusedly fled,
Arjuna and Vāsudeva-Krishna blew loudly
on their splendid conches.

35 Seeing the Kaurava soldiers scattering,
pitā Devavrata-Bhīṣma,
strict-vowed elder, smiled and said
to brave Bhāradvāja-Droṇa:

36 "Pāṇḍu's powerful and courageous son
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
assisted by Krishna, does what he pleases
with our soldiers.

37 He is invincible;
he possesses the ferocity
of the world-destroyer Kāla himself,
of Antaka, of Yama.

38 Impossible to rally our troops now!
For look,
they stare wildly at each other,
and flee in panic.

39 And the sun, stealing the sight
of the world,
retires to the bosom
of the lofty Asta hills.

40 Time for us to retreat, O bull-brave hero!
I am convinced
our terrified troops are in no condition
to fight."

41 Saying this to Droṇa,
the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma,
finest of ācāryas,
pulled back his troops.

42 The Somakas, Pāñcālas, and Pāṇḍavas,
with their elephants,
chariots, and cavalry, filled the field
with victory cries.

43 The mahā-chariot-heroes exulted; shouting,
they danced on the battlefield;
led by Arjuna.
they marched to their tents.

44 And so the sun set, O Bharata.
It was the time of *saṁdhyā*.
Both armies withdrew at the hour
of *saṁdhyā*-twilight.

SECTION FIFTY-SIX

1 O Bharata! Night passed, and day dawned,
and Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
(continued Sañjaya) ordered the Kauravas
to prepare for battle.

2 The Kuru Pitāmaha, eager to win victory
for your son,
organised the mahā-battle-strategy
known as the Gāruḍa.

3 Strict-vowed *pitā* Devavrata-Bhīṣma
positioned himself
on the Gāruḍa-bird's back;
the bird's eyes were Droṇa and Kṛtavarman.

4 The illustrious heroes Aśvatthāman and Kṛpa,
reinforced by the Trigartas,
Matsyas, Kekayas, and Vāṭadhānas,
were its head.

5 O respectworthy monarch! Bhūriśravas, Śala, Śalya,
Bhagadatta, the Madrakas, Sindhus, Sauvīras,
and Pañcanadas –

6 With Jayadratha as leader
formed the bird's neck.
The back consisted of rājā Duryodhana
and his followers.

7 Vinda, Anuvlnda of Avanti, the Kāmbojas, the Śakas,
the Śūrasenas, mahārāja, formed its tail.

8 The Magadhas, Kaliṅgas, and Daserakas,
all in armour, formed the right wing.

9 The Karūṣas, Vikuñjas, Muṇḍas, and Kuṇḍivṛṣas,
led by Bṛhadbala, formed the left wing.

10 Seeing his enemies organised
into a new formation,
ambidexterons Savyasācī-Arjuna and Dhṛṣṭadyumna
devised a counter-*vyūha.*

11 To neutralise the strength of your *vyūha*,
Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
planned the Half-Moon Strategy,
Bhīma covering its right flank

12 With powerfully armed rulers
from various countries;
behind Bhīma were Virāṭa
and the mahā-chariot-hero Drupada.

13 Beside them was Nīla
with many fierce weapons;
beside Nīla was Dhṛṣṭaketu,
the mahā-powerful warrior,

14 Assisted by strong contingents of Cedis,
Kāśīs, Karūṣas, and Pauravas.
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍin, the Pāñcālas
and Prabhadrakas,

15 With soldiers from other lands,
protected the centre,
which was also guarded by Yudhiṣṭhira
and his elephants.

16 Beside them, O rājā, was Sātyaki
and Draupadī's five sons;
next came brave Abhimanyu
and Irāvat.

17 Then Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca and the Kekayas,
all mahā-chariot-heroes.
Then super-excelling Arjuna,
on the left,

18 Assisted by Janārdana-Krishna,
protector of the entire universe.
This was the composition of the *vyūha*
Arjuna devised

19 For the destruction of your sons
and your allies.
Then the battle commenced
between the two armies –

20 In the confusion elephants and chariots
got entangled –
everywhere was a mass of elephants
and chariots,

21 Each charging upon the other
in orgies of destruction.
Chariot-wheels and drumbeats
produced a deafening din.

22 The *dundubhi*-drums sounded.
The heroes shouted.
They slaughtered each other, and shouted.
O Bharata! Their shouts shattered the sky.

SECTION FIFTY-SEVEN

1 O Bharata! Dhanañjaya-Arjuna (Sañjaya continued)
started his slaughter
of your chariot-heroes
the instant the two armies clashed.

2 And though your chariot-warriors
were decimated by Pārtha Arjuna
like Kāla at the time of yuga-dissolution,
they bravely retaliated.

3 The armies of Duryodhana fought well
against the armies of the Pāṇḍavas:
they sought glory
and welcomed death.

4 Though badly mauled,
they repeatedly pierced through
the ranks of the Pāṇḍavas, O rājā,
and spread terror.

5 Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas alternated
between panic and re-grouping,
so much so that sometimes
nothing was distinguishable

6 In the prevailing confusion.
Thick dust obscured the sun;
the eight directions were blotted;
who was killing who?

7 O lord of the world! The soldiers fought
by hints and guesses,
by passwords, names, military colours
and *gotra* characteristics.

8 There appeared to be no way
of smashing through
the Kaurava formation devised by Droṇa,
Bharadvāja's son,

9 Nor any way of disintegrating
the Pāṇḍava strategy,
protected by ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna
and by Bhīma.

10 O rājā! Chariots, elephants
and foot-soldiers
stepped out of their ranks
and fought isolated duels.

11 Horsemen slashed horsemen
with long, sharp lances
and glittering swords
in that fierce, mahā-gory clash.

12 Chariot-heroes mowed down chariot-heroes
with golden arrows
that whistled through the air
with feathery wings.

13 Elephant-warriors slaughtered elephant-warriors
at close quarters
with broad-headed arrows
and sharp long lances.

14 Now and then an over-enthusiastic soldier
would leap up,
clutch his foe by the hair,
and swiftly decapitate him.

15 And other soldiers, chests ripped open
by elephant tusks,
panted while their lifeblood gushed out
before their eyes.

16 One soldier, perched on an elephant-tusk,
fought furiously;
then a *śakti* hit him,
and he tumbled down headlong.

17 Once angry, then exulting,
foot-soldiers blindly slashed
at each other on that blood-drenched
field of battle.

18 A chariot-hero clashed with and killed
elephant and rider;
and an elephant-warrior mercilessly trampled
a chariot-hero.

19 O bull-brave Bharata! Horsemen with their lances
fatally pierced chariot-heroes,
and chariot-heroes bore down on
and crushed cavalry.

20 On both sides, foot-soldiers slaughtered
chariot-heroes,
and chariot-heroes killed foot-soldiers
with sharp weapons.

21 It was a harrowing spectacle –
riders of elephants
and ordinary soldiers
butchering each other.

22 What a sight! – elephant-riders
trampling foot-soldiers,
and foot-soldiers dragging and killing
elephant-riders.

23 Hundreds of thousands of horsemen
killed by foot-soldiers!
Hundreds of thousands of foot-soldiers
killed by horsemen!

24 Shattered flagstaffs, bows, *tomara*-lances, elephant-
trappings, maces, *prāsa*-spears, *kāmpanas, parigha*-clubs,

25 *Śaktis,* varied armours, glittering swords, goads,
golden-feathered arrows, glittering spears,

26 Mahā-expensive carpets – the battlefield looked,
O excelling Bharata, as if garlanded with flowers.

27 Corpses of men, horses and elephants
lay scattered
on the mahā-field, turing it into a mire
of flesh and blood.

28 So much human blood,
that the dust settled and congealed,
and the cardinal points were again visible,
O lord of men.

29 Headless bodies seemed to rise
out of the ground, O Bharata,
foreboding the destruction
of the entire universe.

30 In that mahā-horrific and bloody battle,
chariot-heroes
could be seen running
in all directions.

31 Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Jayadratha of the Sindhus,
Purumitra, Jaya, Bhoja, Śalya, Saubala-Śakuni –

32 These invincible heroes
with the courage of lions
repeatedly succeeded in penetrating
the Pāṇḍava ranks.

33 O descendant of Bharata! Bhīma, the rākṣasa
Ghatoṭkaca,
Sātyaki, Cekitāna, the sons of Draupadī –

34 These, with the help of their rājā allies,
sorely harassed
your soldiers and sons, as the gods harassed
the Dānava antigods.

35 Those bull-brave Kṣatriya stalwarts clashed
on the battlefield;
their bloodied bodies were bright-red
like Dānava warriors.

36 The heroes who were victorious
on the battlefield
stood out, as prominent
as stars in the sky.

37 Then, suddenly, your son Duryodhana,
with one thousand chariot-heroes,
attacked Pāṇḍu's sons
and the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca.

38 The Pāṇḍavas also, in thousands upon thousands,
prepared to meet
the onslaught of Bhīṣma
and Droṇa.

39 Diadem-wearing Kirīṭin-Arjuna advanced
to repulse them;
Ārjuni-Abhimanyu and Sātyaki confronted
Subala's son Śakuni.

40 And so another horripilating,
horrendous clash commenced
between soldiers desperately eager
to win the war.

SECTION FIFTY-EIGHT

1 The enraged earth-lords saw Phālguna-Arjuna
(continued Sañjaya)
and quickly encircled him
with thousands of chariots.

2 O descendant of Bharata,
having surrounded him
with thousands of chariots, they showered
hundreds of arrows on him.

3 Shining *śaktīs*, sharp lances, and spiked maces,
prāsa-spears, battle-axes, bludgeons,
and *mudgara*-clubs –

4 These they hurled angrily
at the chariot of Phālguna-Arjuna.
The weapons fell on Arjuna
like a rain of locusts.

5 Pārtha-Arjuna blocked them
with his gold-feathered arrows.
Seeing dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna's
dexterity of response,

6 The gods, Dānavas, gandharvas, *piśācas*, rākṣasas
and *uraga*-snakes offered pūjā-respect
to Phālguna-Arjuna, saying, "O Indra-among-rājās!
Sādhu! *Sādhu*! Excellent! Excellent!"

7 The valiant Gāndhāras,
conmanded by Subala's son Śakuni,
cleverly managed to encircle Sātyaki
and Abhimanyu.

8 Led by Saubala-Śakuni,
those warriors angrily wrecked
Sātyaki's incomparable chariot
with diverse war weapons,

[VI:58:9-17]

9 With the result that foe-crushing Sātyaki
was forced to abandon his chariot
and seek refuge
in the chariot of Abhimanyu.

10 Two heroes – in one chariot – and they began
a steady slaughter
of Śakuni's soldiers
with their sharp knotted arrows.

11 Droṇa and Bhīṣma replied
by harassing dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira's soldiers
with arrows fitted
with dazzling bright *kaṅka*-feathers.

12 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Dharma,
and Mādrī's twin sons by Pāṇḍu,
in the presence of all, launched an attack
on Droṇa's soldiers.

13 A tumultuous, horripilating battle!
A battle that resembled
the gory one in the ancient past
between gods and antigods.

14 In the meantime, Bhīma and Ghaṭotkaca
introduced themselves
and made the Kaurava positions insecure
and vulnerable.

15 O Bharata, the wondrous feats
of the son of Hiḍimbā
were such that they excelled even those
of his father Bhīma.

16 Livid with anger, but smiling,
Pāṇḍava Bhīma shot an arrow
which struck squarely the chest
of revengeful Duryodhana.

17 Rājā Duryodhana, grievously wounded
by that arrow,
slumped down in his chariot,
as if unconscious.

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18 Seeing him collapse in a faint,
his charioteer, O rājā,
sped him away.
His soldiers panicked and fled.

19 Bhīma pursued them relentlessly,
pounding the scattered Kauravas
with volley upon volley
of sharp arrows.

20 The unrivalled chariot-hero Pārṣata-
Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
and the son of Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira,
before the very eyes of Droṇa
and Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma,

21 Harassed the escaping soldiers
with sharp enemy-exterminating arrows.
But many troops succeeded
in fleeing from the field.

22 The two mahā-chariot-heroes Droṇa and Bhīṣma
failed to stop the rout,
though mahā-ātmaned Droṇa and Bhīṣma
tried their best.

23 The panicky soldiers eluded their attempts.
And even as
those thousands of chariot-warriors
fled helter-skelter,

24 Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu and Sātyaki,
two bull-brave warriors,
from one chariot, commenced their devastation
of Śakuni's troops.

25 The two bull-brave Kurus looked as radiant
as the sun and the moon
seen together in the sky
after the dark *amāvāsya* fortnight.

26 O lord of the world! It was now Arjuna
who recklessly rained arrows
on your soldiers
as clouds do monsoon showers.

27 Stupefied by the unceasing onslaught
of Pārtha-Arjuna,
the Kaurava ranks wavered, broke,
and fled.

28 Upset by this, the mahā-chariot-heroes
Droṇa and Bhīṣma,
acting for the good of Duryodhana,
tried stopping them.

29 O lord of the world!
Rājā Duryodhana persuaded the soldiers
to keep calm,
encouraging them to re-form ranks.

30 The mahā-chariot-hero Kṣatriyas listened,
O Bharata,
and halted when they saw your son
on the field.

31 The soldiers, seeing their leaders listening,
stopped, partly, O rājā,
out of shame and partly
to demonstrate their courage.

32 O lord of the world!
The ranks rallied,
and on the field they looked
like heaving sea-waves at moon-rise.

33 Observing his army's rout prevented,
rājā Duryodhana
went to Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
and said to him:

34 "Pitāmaha of the Kauravas!
Listen to my words.
I do not think it does any credit
to anyone

35 That my soldiers should flee in panic
so long as you,
bow-expert Droṇa, Kṛpa, Aśvatthāman and others
are alive.

36 The Pāṇḍavas are certainly no match
for you –
nor for Droṇa, Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
and Kṛpa.

37 Pitāmaha, revered elder,
you favour the Pāṇḍavas –
that is why you allow them
to kill my soldiers.

38 O rājā! You should have told me,
before the war began,
that you were not ready to fight the Pāṇḍavas,
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Sātyaki.

39 If I had known this in advance
from you, ācārya Droṇa and Kṛpa,
I would have consulted Karṇa
and taken appropriate steps.

40 Think, if it is proper to abandon
my cause now, O bull-brave heroes –
if not, I shall expect full support
from both of you."

41 Bhīṣma heard this and laughed
again and again;
then, glancing angrily at your son,
he said:

42 "I have many times given you sound,
sensible advice, O rājā.
Even Vāsava-Indra and the gods
cannot overcome the Pāṇḍavas.

43 I will do what I can, O excellent king.
I am old, but I will fight
in this battle with all my śakti.
Watch me, you and your brothers!

44 I shall see that the Pāṇḍavas
and their soldiers
and their kinsmen and followers
advance no further."

45 O lord of men, this assurance of Bhīṣma
brought joy to your son's heart.
He ordered drums beaten,
conches blown.

46 The Pāṇḍavas heard the mahā-deafening din,
and ordered, O rājā,
their own soldiers to sound their cymbals
and beat their *bheri*-drums.

SECTION FIFTY-NINE

1 "Provoked by the angry words of my son,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"after Bhīṣma made that terrible promise
on the field,

2 What did he do to the Pāṇḍavas,
and what did the Pāñcālas
do to the Pitāmaha?
Tell me, Sañjaya."

3 After the morning ended (replied Sañjaya)
and the sun, O Bharata,
slowly had completed
part of his westward decline,

4 And the mahā-ātmaned Pāṇḍavas
began to celebrate their victory,
your all-dharma-knowing *pitā*,
Devavrata-Bhīṣma

5 Chose the swiftest horses
to pierce the Pāṇḍava defence;
he was assisted by all your sons
and a host of soldiers.

6 A truly horripilating and horrendous battle raged,
O Bharata,
between us and the Pāṇḍavas –
all because of your adharma.

7 Bows twanged and bowstrings flapped –
the combined noise
was a deafening roar
like that of hills toppling.

8 "Stand!" "I'm here!" "Turn around!"
"Wait!" "I'm ready!"
"Hit now!" – these were the only words
that were heard.

9 Golden armours, diadems, and flagstaffs
clashed and shattered
with the noise of stones
rolling down hills.

10 Hundreds and thousands of heads and arms
adorned with jewels
fell on the battleground,
some still twitching.

11 And many warriors, finest of the finest,
stood headless on the field,
still clutching their bows
and other weapons.

12 And soon the field
was a mahā-fearful river of blood, –
elephant carcasses its rocks,
floating flesh its mire,

13 The blood oozing from corpses of men,
elephants and horses,
a feast for vultures and jackals,
flowing to the after-life ocean.

14 O Bharata king! A battle of that magnitude
was neither seen
nor heard of before –
such was the Pāṇḍava-Kaurava carnage.

15 Corpses blocked the paths of chariots.
Dead elephants
dotted the battlefield
like so many huge hills.

[VI:59:16-23]

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16 O respectworthy monarch! With so many colourful
head-dresses and armours strewn around,
the field looked as lovely
as an autumn sky.

17 Even fatally wounded soldiers
could be seen
proudly and joyfully
charging on their enemies.

18 Everywhere on the field, agonised wails:
"*Tāta*! Father!"
"Brother!"
"*Sakhā*-friend!"
"O do not leave me!"

19 And other voices:
"Come here!"
"Why are you frightened?"
"Where are you running?"
"Here I am!"
"Be firm. Cast off fear."

20 Stretching his bow taut
into a full circular maṇḍala,
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
shot fiery snake-vicious arrows.

21 Identifying each by name, strict-vowed Bhīṣma,
O bull-brave Bharata,
fired his arrows in a continuous stream
at the Pāṇḍavas.

22 His hands had the touch of dexterous magic!
O rājā! He seemed to be dancing in his chariot!
He seemed to be everywhere like a flaming *cakra*!

23 His hands had the touch of magic!
He was one man,
But the Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas saw him
Multiplied a thousand-fold!

24 And they all thought:
It is māyā!
Bhīṣma has multiplied himself by māyā!
He was now in the east,
And the next instant he was in the west!

25 Then north, O *prabhu*-lord!
Then suddenly south!
Gaṅgā's valiant son Bhīṣma was everywhere!

26 None of the Pāṇḍavas dared look at him.
They saw only the arrows
That sped ceaselessly from his bow.

27 The Pāṇḍavas saw him perform
such remarkable feats
and cause such havoc in their ranks
that they moaned.

28 Their *pitā* ancestor was a human monster!
And the rājās –
they perished
like blind swarms of locusts

29 In the blazing fire of Bhīṣma's fierce
all-embracing destruction.
Not one arrow of Bhīṣma
failed to find its target.

30 He preferred to shoot arrows
fitted with *kaṅka*-feathers.
With a single feathered arrow
he killed an elephant

31 With the ease of Indra smashing a hill
with his thunderbolt.
Your *pitā* slaughtered armour-clad
elephant-warriors,

32 Two or three at a time,
with single well-aimed arrows.
Whoever crossed the path
of that tiger-among-men

33 Was seen the next instant prostrate
on the ground.
The mahā-army of the rājā-of-dharma
Yudhiṣṭhira,

34 Decimated by the attack of valiant Bhīṣma,
dispersed, panicked
and fled in a thousand directions.
Arrow-anguished,

35 Even the soldiers of Pārtha-Arjuna and Śikhaṇḍin
fled in fear,
in Vāsudeva-Krishna's presence.
No stopping the mahā-chariot-warriors

36 As they broke ranks in terror, so cruelly
were they afflicted with Bhīṣma's arrows.
Bhīṣma's feat equalled
that of Mahendra-Indra.

37 Mahārāja, so complete was the rout
that two soldiers
could not be seen together;
horses, elephants, humans perished.

38 The Pāṇḍava survivors could only wail "Hai! Hai!"
in utter despair.
Father struck son,
son struck father,

39 *Sakhā*-friend killed *sakhā*-friend,
as if propelled by fate.
Abandoning their armour,
many soldiers of Pāṇḍu's sons,

40 Dishevelled and fear-stricken, fled,
O Bharata;
and the chariot-heroes stood bewildered
like docile cows.

41 Seeing the Pāṇḍava army overwhelmed,
Krishna, delighter of the Yādavas,
took stock of the situation;
he brought

42 The splendid chariot to a dead stop,
and said to dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna:
"The time you waited for is now.
This is your chance, Pārtha.

43 Take it, unless you have lost your senses,
O tiger-among-men!
O hero! A long time ago you warned
the assembly of rājās:

44 'I will kill all the soldiers
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons,
who are led by Bhīṣma and Droṇa,
on the battlefield.'

45 O son of Kuntī, punisher of enemies,
be true to your word!
Look, O dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
your army is fleeing!

46 Look, the leaders of Yudhiṣṭhira's army
have panicked
seeing the all-destroyer Antaka-Bhīṣma
with his all-swallowing mouth.

47 Terrified, they scamper like puny creatures
from a lion."
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna listened to Vāsudeva-Krishna,
and replied:

48 "Urge the chariot horses and drive me
to the ocean-army of Bhīṣma.
Today I will humble the revered elder
Kaurava *pitāmaha*!"

49 O rājā! Mādhava-Krishna urged the silver steeds
of the blinding sun-bright chariot
to the spot
where Bhīṣma stood.

50 Seeing the mahā-muscled son of Kuntī
rushing at Bhīṣma,
the mahā-army of Yudhiṣṭhira
recovered its confidence.

51 Finest-of-Kurus Bhīṣma roared repeatedly
like a lion,
and released a shower of arrows
on Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's chariot.

52 So thick was that arrow-discharge that,
in an instant,
Arjuna's chariot, charioteer and flagstaff
could not be seen.

53 Immensely powerful Vāsudeva-Krishna
succeeded in controlling,
with great patience, the wounded horses
of the chariot.

54 Pārtha-Arjuna, with his divine bow
which twanged like thunderclouds,
used sharp arrows to slice Bhīṣma's bow
with supreme ease.

55 Your *pitā*, the Kaurava hero,
bereft of his bow,
picked up another,
stringing it in a flash.

56 Using both hands skilfully,
he pulled the cloud-roaring bow taut.
Infuriated Arjuna shattered
that bow also.

57 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma paid pūjā-respect
to Arjuna's nimbleness:
"*Sādhu! Sādhu!* Pāṇḍu's mahā-muscled son!
Excellent! Excellent!

58 Such mahā-skill! Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
I expected this of you.
I am proud of you. Come, my child,
fight with me."

59 Finishing his praise of Pārtha-Arjuna,
he lifted a huge bow,
and started shooting arrows afresh
at Pṛthā-Kuntī's son.

60 And Vāsudeva-Krishna displayed his super-skill
by driving the chariot
in short maṇḍala-manoeuvres
to escape the arrows.

61 With incredible force Bhīṣma succeeded
in wounding Vāsudeva-Krishna
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna with another arrow-volley,
O Bharata.

62 Bleeding from the wounds produced
by Bhīṣma's attack,
the two tiger-brave heroes looked
like bellowing horn-gored bulls.

63 Bhīṣma, stirred to a fury
of unsuppressable ferocity,
continued harassing them
with thousands of arrows.

64 Bhīṣma laughed loudly again and again;
he surprised Krishna –
he made even the Vārṣṇeya hero Krishna
tremble!

65 Mahā-muscled Krishna saw the fervour
of valiant Bhīṣma
and the tame reaction
of Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna;

66 He saw the ceaseless deluge of arrows
shot by Bhīṣma
who straddled the armies
like an all-consuming sun;

67 He saw Bhīṣma slaughter the soldiers
of Yudhiṣṭhira's army
as if he was the dreaded doom
at the end of a yuga;

68 And destroyer-of-heroes *bhagavān* Keśava-Krishna
almost gave up hope –
he could not imagine how Yudhiṣṭhira
would survive the carnage,

69 Because Bhīṣma was capable of extirpating
even gods and Dānava antigods in one day;
for him to kill the Pāṇḍavas
was much too easy.

70 The massive army of mahātmā Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira
again retreated.
Seeing the Somaka warriors routed,
the Kaurava heroes,

71 Delighting Pitāmāha Bhīṣma, swung into action.
And Krishna thought:
For the sake of the Pāṇḍavas let me put on armour
and kill Bhīṣma.

72 *Let me lighten the load of the Pāṇḍava mahātmās.*
It seems that Arjuna,
wounded by sharp arrows,
is a little unsure

73 *On the nature of his duty;*
perhaps he respects the glory
of guru Bhīṣma too much. While Krishna reflected,
Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
continued angrily to shoot showers of arrows
on Pārtha-Arjuna's chariot.

74 Such a hail of arrows!
They shrouded the sky
till nothing was visible –
all sides, all directions
completely enveloped –
no sky, no earth,
no radiant sun.
Only smoky winds blowing –
everything turbulent.

75 Vikarṇa and Droṇa,
Jayadratha, Bhūriśravas,
Kṛtavarman and Kṛpa,
rājā Ambaṣṭha-pati,
Vinda, Anuvinda,
Śrutāyus, Sudakṣiṇa,

76 The kings of the west,
Sauvīras, Vasātis,
Kṣudrakas, Mālavas –
commanded by Bhīṣma,
they marched to do battle
with Kirīṭin-Arjuna.

77 And Sātyaki saw,
from a distance, Arjuna
the diademed hero
advancing to fight
with chariots and soldiers,
and numerous elephants.

78 Seeing Vāsudeva and Arjuna
advance with their soldiers
and horses and chariots
and elephants, Sātyaki,
heroic arms-wielder,
prepared to assist them.

79 That mahā-archer,
Sātyaki, immediately
proceeded to Arjuna,
providing support
like Viṣṇu to Indra,
the slayer of Vṛtra.

80 That excellent warrior,
Sātyaki, cheerfully
inspired the soldiers
frightened by Bhīṣma
and fleeing with chariots
and horses and elephants:

81 "Listen, O Kṣatriyas!
Where are you running?
Is this your dharma
recommended by elders?
Stand firm – and practise
the dharma of heroes."

82 Krishna, younger brother
of Vāsava-Indra,
seeing the rājās fleeing,
and Arjuna timidly
tolerating Bhīṣma
humbling the Pāṇḍavas –

83 Krishna, mahātmā
and Dāśārha-saviour,
seeing the Kauravas rushing
to attack, was upset,
and spoke the following
praise of Sātyaki:

84 "Pride of the Śinis!
Let the cowardly flee!
Let the heroes remain!
The time is at hand
for Bhīṣma and Droṇa
to fall at my hands.

85 Which Kaurava chariot-hero
escapes the wrath
of Sātvata-Krishna?
With my fierce *cakra*
today I will kill
mahā-vowed Bhīṣma.

86 I will kill the chariot-heroes
Bhīṣma and Droṇa,
and their followers, and please
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna and Bhīma
and rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
and the Aśvin twins.

87 After I have killed
all the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
and their Indra-like followers,
I will offer the kingdom
to rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
the one-who-is-foeless."

88 Mahā-imagining Krishna
said this and invoked
his weapon, the *cakra*
known as Sudarśana –
and, thought-swift, the weapon
materialised instantly.

89 The hub of the *cakra*
was a circle enchanted:
dazzling sun, roaring
thunder, slicing razor.
Vasudeva's son,
discarding his reins,

90 Krishna mahātmā,
with a leap, dismounted
and ran towards Bhīṣma
like a lion charging
an elephant, intent
on mauling and killing.

91 Krishna, younger brother
of Mahendra-Indra,
saw Bhīṣma aloof
in the middle of his army.
His ochre robe fluttered
like a cloud charged with lightning.

92 His Sudarśana *cakra*
gleamed like a lotus
on the stalk of his arm,
a dawn-lovely lotus,
like the lotus that blossomed
from Nārāyaṇa's navel.

93 The lake of the lotus
was the body of Krishna
pink-flushed with wrath,
a lotus whose leaves
were as sharp as a razor
in the hand of Nārāyaṇa.

94 The soldiers saw enraged
Krishna, younger brother
of Mahendra-Indra,
shouting his war-cries,
brandishing the *cakra*;
they trembled and screamed.

95 They thought that the doom
of the worlds had come,
for armed with the *cakra*
Vāsudeva-Krishna
was the fire that consumes
on the day of dissolution,
like a comet that flashes
from the Guru of the Universe
to annihilate all.

96 Śāntanu's son, perceiving
divinity approaching,
cakra in hand,
stood firm in his chariot,
with his Gāṇḍīva like bow,
and fearlessly facing

97 The endlessly glorious
presence of Govinda,
he welcomed him saying:
"O lord of the gods! Mādhava!
Whose abode is the world!
Cakra-wielder! *Namo-astu*!

98 Refuge of the worlds!
Grant me the blessing
to die at your hands!

99 O chief of the Vṛṣṇis
and Andhakas, Krishna!
If I die at your hands,
I will prosper now
and in after-life too.
You have honoured me, Krishna."

100 When glorious-armed Krishna
continued advancing,
Pārtha-Arjuna descended
from his chariot and ran,
restraining Hari-Krishna
with his muscular arms.

101 But ātma-yogi Krishna,
the primeval deity,
continued advancing
with the speed of a tempest,
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna helplessly
dragged with Viṣṇu-Krishna.

102 Only, O rājā, when Krishna
was ten steps from Bhīṣma
did diademed Arjuna
succeed in holding
on tight to his legs
and stopped his advance.

103 When Krishna stopped,
gold-garlanded Arjuna,
delighted, revered him:
"Control your wrath, Keśava!
O friend of the Pāṇḍavas,
be gracious to us.

104 I swear by my sons, Keśava,
I swear by my brothers,
I will do my duty!
Indra's younger brother, command me!
I am ready to wipe out
the Kaurava army."

105 Arjuna's promise reassured
Janārdana-Krishna
who was Arjuna's well-wisher;
holding his *cakra,* he remounted
the chariot of Arjuna,
the finest of the Kauravas.

106 Śauri-Krishna the foe-smiter
again held the reins.
Then, lifting his conch,
the Pañcajanya,
he shattered the sky
with a fierce war-cry.

107 And the Kaurava warriors
responded with war-cries
when they saw Krishna
with necklace and earrings
and dust-smeared lotus-eyes
and milk-white teeth.

108 The clashing of cymbals,
the chariot-wheels rattling,
the *dundubhi*-kettledrums,
the leonine shouts
of the Kaurava heroes –
a dreadful cacophony.

109 The thunderous roar
of the twanging Gāṇḍīva
spread over the sky;
the arrows it fired,
dazzlingly bright,
spread over the field.

110 Duryodhana and Bhīṣma
and brave Bhūriśravas,
with arrows and bows,
concertedly charged,
like a comet that shatters
a whole constellation.

111 Bhūriśravas hurled
seven gold javelins,
Duryodhana a lance,
Śalya a mace,
and Śāntanu's son
Bhīṣma a *śakti*.

112 The arrow-swift javelins
of brave Bhūriśravas
were shattered by seven
arrows of Arjuna,
another arrow smashing
the lance of Duryodhana.

113 The *śakti* of Bhīṣma
that dazzled like lightning
was felled by one arrow,
another destroying
the mace that was hurled
by the ruler of Madra.

114 Then Arjuna, with both hands,
pulled taut the Gāṇḍīva,
invoking the fearful
and wonderful weapon,
the Mahendra-astra.
It appeared in the sky.

115 With that weapon that dazzled
like fire, mahā-bowman
mahātmā Arjuna,
gold-garlanded, diademed,
frustrated the proud
advance of the Kauravas.

116 Pārtha-Arjuna's arrows
lopped off the arms,
the flagstaffs of chariots,
the bows of the soldiers,
and shredded the enemy's
horses and elephants.

117 The harrowing twang
of the Gāṇḍīva shook
the hearts of the Kauravas
as Kirīṭin-Arjuna
obscured the directions
with his dreadful arrows.

118 In that fearful encounter,
the noise of the conches
and the drums and the chariots
was instantly silenced
by the all-reverberating
twang of the Gāṇḍīva.

119 Recognising the twang
to be the Gāṇḍīva's,
the Pāñcāla rājā
and rājā Virāṭa
proceeded with confidence
to the site of the battle.

120 But none had the courage
to proceed to the spot
where the Gāṇḍīva was;
the enemy, transfixed,
stood helpless on hearing
the petrifying twang.

121 In the carnage that followed,
numerous kings,
charioteers, soldiers,
and chariot-heroes perished.
Caparisoned elephants
with glittering banners,

122 Fell to the arrows
of Kirīṭin-Arjuna.
And hosts of warriors,
their flesh penetrated
by sharp feathered arrows,
fell victim to Arjuna.

123 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna sliced
the *indrakīlas* and *yantras*
of the flagstaffs of kings.
And soldiers and chariots
and horses and elephants
were all massacred.

124 They dropped on the field
like sticks, O rājā,
numbed by the impact
of Arjuna's arrows.
The Aindra missile
killed hundreds of thousands.

125 The arrows of Kirīṭin-
Arjuna created
a river of blood,
its waters the gushing
wounds of the dying,
thrashing feet its froth.

126 A fear-filled river!
A broad-flowing river!
Carcases of elephants
and horses its banks!
Its mire the marrow
of humans and rākṣasas.

127 Its moss the hair
on decapitated heads;
its sandbanks, bodies;
its waves, floating armour;
its pebbles the bones
of humans and animals.

128 Its banks were infested
with jackals and wolves
and cranes and *tarakṣus*
and hyenas – the mahā-river
Vaitaraṇī, separating
this world from the next!

129 The victory chants celebrated
the rout of the Kauravas
by Phālguna-Arjuna,
much as a lion
terrifies creatures
by the strength of his prowess.

130 The Cedis, Pāñcālas,
Karūṣas and Matsyas,
observing the slaughter,
victoriously cheered
with war-cries that frightened
the rest of the Kauravas.

131 Like a lion terrorising deer
did Kirīṭin-Arjuna
agitate his enemies.
Stricken with fear,
the enemy generals
saw their armies destroyed.

132 Janārdana-Krishna
and the Gāṇḍīva-wielder
Arjuna were exultant.
Then they saw the sun
inpulling his rays –
and the grievously wounded

133 Duryodhana-led Kauravas,
including Bāhlīka,
and Droṇa and Bhīṣma –
all yuga-end victims
of the Mahendra-weapon's
proliferating horrors.

134 And so, achieving
renown, and observing
the wan sun and *saṁdhyā,*
the Pāṇḍavas and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
retired. Their work
was ended; they rested.

135 The Pāṇḍavas decided
to sleep; they rested
in the cool of their camp.
But the Kauravas started
a tremendous uproar
as night fell.

136 They complained *Arjuna*
has massacred thousands
of chariot-heroes, and
seven hundred elephants. Westerners
and Sauvīras, Kṣudrakas,
and Mālavas are dead.

137 *Indeed, a mahā-feat*
of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Who else could do it?
Śrutāyus, the rājā
of Ambaṣṭha, and also
irresistible Citrasena,

138 *And Droṇa and Kṛpa,*
Jayadratha, Bāhlīka,
Bhūriśravas and Śalya,
and Śala and hundreds
of others are defeated
by enraged Pārtha-Arjuna,

139 *Kirīṭin-Arjuna, the world's*
mahā-chariot-hero,
unbeaten by Bhīṣma!
With these words they withdrew
to their tents and retired
from the field of battle.

140 Innumerable lamps
and thousands of torches
illumined their way,
but fear of Kirīṭin-Arjuna
accompanied the Kauravas
wherever they went.

SECTION SIXTY

1 Night passed (said Sañjaya),
and Bhīṣma mahātmā,
in a burst of anger,
O Bharata, attacked
with innumerable troops
the Pāṇḍava forces.

2 Accompanying him
were Droṇa, Duryodhana,
Bāhlīka, Durmarṣaṇa,
Jayadratha, Citrasena,
and soldiers commanded
by valiant kings.

3 Surrounded, O rājā,
by mahā-chariot-heroes
of incredible prowess,
he shone in their midst
like Vajrapāṇi-Indra
ringed by the gods.

4 The colourful flags –
in yellows and reds
and whites and browns –
on the backs of elephants
waved in the breeze
and enraptured the eyes.

5 Mahā-chariot-heroes,
horses and elephants,
commanded by Bhīṣma –
an impressive array,
like clouds full of lightning,
like clouds full of rain.

6 With the speed of the Gaṅgā
as it flows to the ocean,
the Kaurava army
commanded by Bhīṣma
impetuously rushed
to inundate Arjuna.

7 The battle-formation
of mahātmā Arjuna –
soldiers and elephants,
horses and chariots –
appeared from a distance
to be ominous clouds.

8 In his white-horsed chariot
stood Arjuna mahātmā,
his high banner fluttering
as he charged at his foes
with attacking arrays
of countless numbers.

9 And your sons were dismayed
when they saw the great hero
with the ape-symbolled flag,
supported by Krishna,
the bull-brave hero
of the Yādava clan.

10 Your troops saw the *vyūha*
devised by the world's
supreme chariot-hero
with all the best weapons.
Each corner was guarded
by four thousand elephants.

11 This strategy resembled
the *vyūha* Yudhiṣṭhira,
rājā of dharma,
devised the first day –
a *vyūha* not seen
or heard of till then.

12 The warriors of Cedi
and the heroes of Pāñcāla
assumed battle stations.
Then the war-drums! And conches!
And trumpets! Till the field
echoed and shuddered.

13 The shouts of the soldiers!
The twanging of bow-strings!
The wail of the conches!
The thudding of drums!
The clang of the cymbals!
A stupendous uproar!

14 The drums and the cymbals
were drowned by the conches,
whose mahā-piercing wail
enveloped the sky,
already obscured
by a network of dust.

15 The valiant heroes,
when the sun reappeared,
advanced to the fray –
and chariot struck chariot,
elephant struck elephant
in the heat of the battle.

16 And horseman hit horseman,
and, wounded, both fell.
And trumpeting elephants
collapsed, agonising.
Pierced by lances
and bleeding from sword-cuts,
horse-riders toppled,
twitched, and lay still.
Oh, it was wonderful!

17 And shields with filigrees
of gold-work, refulgent
like sunlight, were shattered
by lances and axes
and swords, and littered
the field of battle.

18 Mutilated by tusks,
chariot-heroes fell
along with charioteers;
and bull-like heroes
of the chariot, mangled
by others, collapsed.

19 And horses, gored
by elephants, screamed;
and horse-riders screamed.
Some soldiers collapsed
when they heard the wails
of their bleeding comrades.

20 It was then, as chariots
and horses and elephants
and soldiers fell fast,
that mahā-chariot-hero
Bhīṣma and his followers
saw ape-symbolled Arjuna.

21 And Bhīṣma, the hero
with a five-palmyra flag,
assiduously attacked
Kirīṭin-Arjuna
whose mahā-weapons dazzled
like lightning itself.

22 O rājā! Droṇa,
Viviṁśati, Śalya,
Duryodhana, Kṛpa,
and Bhūriśravas charged
at the son of Indra
who equalled Śakra-Indra.

23 Bedecked in gold armour,
and skilled in all weapons,
Abhimanyu, the son
of Arjuna, emerged
from the ranks and attacked
the Kaurava soldiers.

24 He blocked the mahā-missiles
the maha-chariot-warriors
fired to repulse him.
He dazzled like Agni
invoked at a ritual
with mahā-mantras.

25 It was Bhīṣma who made
a river of gore
to flow on the field,
its waters his foe's blood.
He ignored Abhimanyu,
targeting Arjuna instead.

26 With the celestial Gāṇḍīva
in his hand, whose twang
was the roaring of clouds,
and wearing his diadem,
Arjuna repulsed
all the arrows of Bhīṣma.

27 The ape-bannered hero,
Arjuna mahātmā,
released upon
that archer unequalled,
illustrious Bhīṣma,
sharp *bhalla*-arrows.

28 But Bhīṣma, untroubled,
frustrated that mahā
network of missiles
released by Arjuna
with a counter-shower,
as the sun dispels darkness.

29 The Kauravas and Sṛñjayas
and others there witnessed
the duel between
two bow-twanging supermen,
Puruṣottamas Bhīṣma
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

SECTION SIXTY-ONE

1 O gracious monarch! (continued Sañjaya)
Śala's son, Citrasena,
Aśvatthāman and Bhūriśravas
attacked Saubhadra-Abhimanyu.

2 These five excellent warriors focused
their weapons on him,
and he fought back
like a lion's cub.

3 In clarity of aim, in bravery,
in skill, and in nimbleness,
in weapons-knowledge,
none equalled him.

4 Pārtha-Arjuna saw his foe-smiting son
desperately fighting
and showing his skill,
and roared a leonine shout.

5 O lord of the earth! Indra-among rājās!
Seeing your grandson Abhimanyu
harassing his attackers, your soldiers
encircled him completely.

6 The foe-smiting son of Subhadrā,
with no help,
continued steadily to repulse
his brave attackers.

7 And as he fought, all present there
saw clearly
his sun-dazzling mahā-bow repeatedly
stretched for shooting.

8 He wounded Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
with one arrow,
Śalya with five, and with eight sliced
Saṁyamani-Śala's flagstaff.

9 The gold-handled mahā-snake-*śakti*
hurled by Saumadatti-Bhūriśravas
was pulverised by Abhimanyu
with one sharp arrow.

10 And Śalya witnessed the splintering
of the hundreds of arrows he fired,
and the deaths
of his four horses.

11 The muscular brilliance of Abhimanyu
stunned Sāṁyamani-Śala, Śalya,
Aśvatthāman, Bhūriśravas, and Aśvatthāman;
they panicked.

12 O Indra-among-rājās!
The Trigartas, the Kekayas,
the twentyfive thousand Madras,
with your son's help,

13 Displaying their excellence in bowcraft
and their pride,
surrounded Kirīṭin-Arjuna and Abhimanyu,
hoping to kill both.

14 O foe-crushing rājā!
The Pāñcāla general Dhṛṣṭadyumna
saw from afar the chariots of mahā-chariot-hero
father and son encircled.

15 With a massive following of thousands
of foot-soldiers and horses,
the general of the Pāṇḍava forces
advanced,

16 His bow pulled taut,
supported by numerous chariots,
and by the Kekaya and Madra warriors,
O foe-chastiser.

17 The personality of their commander
and the grandeur
of the chariots, horses and elephants
dazzled all.

18 Pāñcāla-dynasty-glory-enhancer Dhṛṣṭadyumna
in Arjuna's presence
wounded Kṛpa in the shoulder and neck
with three arrows.

19 He incapacitated ten Madra warriors with ten,
and with one *bhalla*-arrow
he killed the leader guarding the rear
of Kṛtavarman.

20 With a broad-tipped *nārāca*-arrow,
foe-exterminating Dhṛṣṭadyumna
killed Damana,
the son of mahā-ātmaned Paurava.

21 But Śalya's son succeeded in wounding
the Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with thirty arrows, and with ten more
his charioteer.

22 Though wounded, mahā-bowman Dhṛṣṭadyumna
ran his tongue over his lips,
and sliced his enemy's bow
with a sharp arrow.

23 With twentyfive more arrows
Dhṛṣṭadyumna wounded the son of Śala,
and killed his horses
and the two wheel-protectors.

24 O bull-brave Bharata! The son of Śala,
from his horseless chariot,
stared helplessly at the mahā-ātmaned
Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

25 Then that bull-brave hero, Śala's son
lifted a mahā-fearful pure-steel sword
and strode
towards Dhṛṣṭadyumna's chariot.

26 He came like a mahā-*uraga*-serpent
falling from the sky.
He came like a huge wave
overrunning the beach.
He came like the doom of Kāla
in the world of man.

27 He charged upon them,
and he shone like the sun.
Astounded, the Pāṇḍavas and Dhṛṣṭadyumna
saw him charge like a musth elephant.

28 He came with his glittering sword,
in his dazzling armour.
The prince of Pāñcāla, Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
saw him descend

29 And, roused to anger, the general waited
till he neared the chariot, too close for arrow-shot.
Then, lifting his mace,
he smashed his enemy's head.

30 O rājā! Śala's son fell down dead.
His shining sword and shield
slipped and fell.
His body fell, and they fell.

31 The powerful mahātmā rājā of Pāñcāla
added lustre to his renown
by killing his foe
with one blow of his mace.

32 O respectworthy monarch! The soldiers saw
the mahā-bowman mahā-chariot-hero prince,
Sala's son, killed; they raised a mahā-uproar,
screaming, "Hai! Hai!"

33 Witnessing his son killed, Saṁyamani-Śala,
bursting with anger,
launched a fierce attack on the battle-hardened
Pāñcāla Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

34 All the rājās of the contending armies
of Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
saw the two war-scarred heroes
locked in combat.

35 Destroyer-of-heroic-foes Śala, wildly enraged,
shot three arrows
at Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna, like a mahout
hook-goading a mahā-elephant.

36 And Śala, the glory of assemblies,
also wounded Dhṛṣṭadyumna in the chest.
With that, another horrendous clash
took place.

SECTION SIXTY-TWO

1 "Fate is stronger than human effort, Sañjaya,"
said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"or why is it my sons are always losing
to the Pāṇḍavas?

2 To believe you is to believe
that my soldiers
are always defeated
and the Pāṇḍavas always victorious.

3 Sañjaya! You say my soldiers
have no manly dignity left,
they are always panicking, fleeing,
or else they are dying.

4 They do their absolute best to win,
but what I hear from you
is how they are always crushed
by the Pāṇḍavas.

5 *Tātā!* Dear one! All I always hear
is Duryodhana
suffering for all the misdeeds
he has done.

6 Sañjaya! I can find no way
of humbling the Pāṇḍavas.
I can see no way my sons
can win this war."

7 O rājā! (replied Sañjaya)
Listen patiently to the carnage
of men and beasts that took place.
Your mahā-injustice began it all.

8 Wounded by Śalya's nine arrows,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna lost his temper
and released a volley of steel arrows
at the Madra ruler.

9 It was an inspiring experience
seeing Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna baffle
quickly the efforts of Śalya,
the glory of human assemblies.

10 No difference could be detected then
in either of the chariot-heroes;
indeed, for that moment
they were equal.

11 But soon, mahārāja,
Śalya sliced the bow
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with a sharp yellow *bhalla*-arrow,

12 After which he pinned down Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with arrows
that fell like rain-clouds drenching
a mountain.

13 Dhṛṣṭadyumna endured the attack.
Meanwhile, angered Abhimanyu
recklessly charged at the chariot
of the Madra rājā.

14 The short-tempered nephew of Krishna,
infinite-ātmaned Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu,
shot three arrows at Ṛtāyana's son,
king Śalya.

15 And so it was, O rājā, that your warriors,
devising a plan
to contain Arjuna, defensively encircled
the Madra rājā.

16 Duryodhana, Vikarṇa, Duḥśāsana, Viviṁśati,
Durmarṣaṇa, Duḥsaha, Citrasena, Durmukha,

17 Satyavrata, Purumitra – these, O Bharata,
Formed a protective circle around Madra's ruler Śalya.

18 Enraged Bhīma, the Pṛṣata prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Draupadī's sons, Abhimanyu, Mādrī's twin sons –

19 O lord of the world! These ten warriors decided to
oppose
The ten warriors of your army, and began shooting.

20 It was your unfair policy, O rājā,
that led them
to seek each other out on the battlefield
with intent to kill.

21 These ten inflamed warriors clashed
with the other ten
in a gory combat –
and the rest of the chariot-heroes watched.

22 And so these mahā-chariot-heroes
released missiles of all kinds
and shouted and harassed
each other.

23 Eager to kill each other
in their frenzy of anger,
they spoke of their prowess,
and screamed their war-cries.

24 They were kinsmen butchering each other,
O rājā,
hurling mahā-missiles in close combat,
aflame with competitive jealousy.

25 Anger-ridden Duryodhana succeeded
in wounding Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with four stone-sharpened arrows
in that mahā-clash.

26 Durmarṣaṇa wounded Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with twenty arrows,
Citrasena with five, Durmukha with nine,
Duḥsaha with seven,

27 Viviṁsati with five, Duḥśāsana with three,
O Indra-among-rājās.
But Dhṛṣṭadyumna, foe-traumatiser,
replied, wounding

28 Each with twenty arrows,
shot with amazing agility.
In that combat, O Bharata,
Satyavrata and Purumitra

29 Were wounded by Abhimanyu
with ten arrows each.
Mādrī's sons, delighters of the heart
of their mother,

30 Harassed their maternal uncle Śalya
with sharp arrow-showers.
Amazing!
Maharāja, to frustrate the two chariot-heroes,

31 Śalya fired a steady stream of arrows
at his nephews.
Though hard pressed, Nakula and Sahadeva
remained calm.

32 Then mahā-powerful Pāṇḍava Bhīma
spotted Duryodhana;
eager to end the battle,
he brandished his mighty mace.

33 Seeing mahā-muscled Bhīma
with his uplifted mace
like the Kailāsa mountain,
your sons panicked and fled.

34 But anger-animated Duryodhana
ordered the Magadha segment,
consisting of ten thousand elephants,
to march against Bhīma.

35 Suyodhana-Duryodhana placed
the ruler of Magadha in front,
and advanced with the army
against Bhīma.

36 Seeing the elephants advancing,
wolf-waisted Bhīma
alighted from his chariot and,
gripping his mace, roared.

37 Brandishing his massive iron mace,
Bhīma charged headlong
into the elephants, his mouth wide open
like fatal Antaka-Kāla's.

38 Like thunderbolt-wielding Vāsava-Indra,
mahā-muscled Bhīma
danced through the field,
massacring with his mace the elephants.

39 The heart-stunning and mind-numbing mahā-war-cries
roared by Bhīma
petrified the elephants
into huddled paralysis.

40 The sons of Draupadī, the mahā-chariot-hero Abhimanyu,
Nakula, Sahadeva, and Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

41 Who were protecting Bhīma's chariot,
advanced behind him,
providing cover with thick showers
of hill-drenching arrow-clouds.

42 With razor-arrows, horse-shoe-headed arrows,
flat-headed *bhalla*-arrows,
and crescent-shaped arrows,
all well-aimed,
the Pāṇḍavas sliced off the heads
of elephant riders.

43 The falling heads dropped
like huge hailstones.
Some riders' braceleted hands still clutched
the iron hooks.

44 The trunks of headless elephant-riders,
still seated
on the beasts' necks,
looked like top-shattered mountain trees.

45 The mahā-ātmaned warrior Dhṛṣṭadyumna
also killed
countless massive elephants;
we saw them fall and die.

46 The ruler of Magadha, incensed,
prodded an elephant resembling Airāvata
to attack the chariot
of Saubhadra-Abhimanyu.

47 The slayer-of-heroic-enemies, brave Abhimanyu,
saw the mahā-elephant
charging at him, and slaughtered it
with a single arrow.

48 The conqueror-of-enemy-forts,
Krishna's nephew Abhimanyu,
decapitated with a silver-winged *bhalla*-arrow
the ruler of Magadha
who was pinned under the corpse
of his huge elephant.

49 Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma
slipped through the elephant horde
and felled them,
as Indra with his bolt shatters mountains.

50 With a single blow of his mace,
we saw him kill on the field
a huge-tusked elephant,
like a thunderbolt splintering a cliff.

51 Hill-huge elephants were butchered,
their tusks broken,
their temples, bones, backs, frontal globes smashed
mercilessly.

52 We saw some on the ground,
some trying to flee the field terror-stricken,
some rolling helpless
in their own urine.

53 Some, terror-stricken,
lay thrashing on the ground, O rājā,
huge hills filthy with fat, blood, marrow
and brain-mush.

54 Mahā-elephants vomiting blood,
dying because they crossed the path of Bhīma,
foaming at the mouth –
we saw the hill-huge beasts

55 Drenched with blood
and bathed in elephant marrow.
Bhīma roamed the field
like the rod-wielding god of death Antaka.

56 His mace dripping with elephant blood,
wolf-waisted Bhīma appeared
to be Śiva the destroyer himself
with his Pināka-bow.

57 Terrified by the depredations of Bhīma,
most of the elephants
in your army ran amok,
creating havoc in your ranks.

58 Just as the gods protect thunder-wielding Indra,
Saubhadra-Abhimanyu's mahā-archers
and charioteers protected Bhīma
as he fought on the field.

59 With his mace dripping with the blood
of elephants,
Rudra-Śiva-fierce Bhīma looked indeed
like the god of death.

60 We saw him, O descendent of Bharata,
whirling his mace
and dancing on the field
like Śaṅkara-Śiva the cosmic dancer.

61 Mahārāja, his mace
was the rod of Yama himself;
its whirling scream was like the roar
of Indra's thunder;

62 It was gruesomely stained with gore,
sticky with marrow and hair;
it was the Pināka of Rudra-Śiva
who kills beasts.

63 Like a herdsman beating his animals
with a staff,
Bhīma afflicted the elephants mercilessly
with his mace.

64 Beset by blows from the mace
and infuriated by arrows,
the elephants fled,
trampling your own soldiers.

65 Like a storm scattering clouds,
Bhīma tumultuously scattered the elephants,
standing firm like trident-wielding Śiva
in a cremation ground.

SECTION SIXTY-THREE

1 After the destruction
of that division of elephants,
your son Duryodhana ordered, "Kill Bhīma!"
(continued Sañjaya)

2 Commanded by your son,
the whole army attacked Bhīma.
The cacophony produced at that time
was incredible.

3 Even the gods would not have dared
fight that army,
as untameable as the ocean
on a full-moon night,

4 An ocean swarming with chariots,
horses, elephants,
reverberating with the noise of conches
and *dundubhi*-kettledrums,
an ocean swarming with numberless
foot-soldiers and chariot-heroes,
an ocean obscured
in a swirl of dust,

5 A mahā-ocean whose power was neutralised
by the counter-force of Bhīmasena
standing as firm
as the ocean-shores.

6 O rājā! We saw with our own eyes
this splendid feat
performed by the mahā-ātmaned son of Pāṇḍu,
Bhīma.

7 Bhīma stood unshakably resolute,
with his mace repulsing all
the earth-lords and their horses, chariots,
and elephants.

8 He stood as stable as mount Meru.
With his mace
he stayed the entire army,
that finest of chariot-heroes.

9 In that gloriously gory, savage, ruthless battle,
his sons,
his brothers,
and the prince of Pāñcāla, Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

10 The sons of Draupadī, Abhimanyu,
and never-defeated Śikhaṇḍin,
sensing danger, stood always ready
to protect mahā-powerful Bhīma.

11 Lifting his massive mace
crafted of *śaikya*-iron,
Bhīma charged like the god of death
Antaka with his rod.

12 He pulped charioteers and horses
with the mace
which he wielded with his powerful arms;
the super-swift-Pāṇḍava

13 Stormed across the field like the conflagration
of Cosmic Time Kāla at the end of a yuga.
The impact of his thighs
coverturned chariots.

14 Soon he was smashing your army
as an elephant tramples weeds.
Dragging riders
from chariots and elephants,

15 Tumbling horsemen from horses,
crushing foot-soldiers,
Bhīma slaughtered all with his mace,
as a storm flattens trees.

16 Bhīma's mahā-muscular ferocity
spread havoc in your son's army.
Dripping with fat, marrow, guts, flesh,
blood-bespattered,

17 His mace, shining and mahā-terrible,
butchered horses and elephants.
Corpses and carcases of men, horses, elephants,
and horse-warriors

18 Made the battlefield
look like the abode of death.
Like the Pināka-bow of Śiva
that slaughters beasts,

19 Like the fearsome rod of Yama,
god of death,
like the ear-splitting thunderbolt
of Indra,

20 Was the massive mace which Bhīma
the mahātmā son of Kuntī
whirled above his head,
like Kāla at the dissolution of a yuga.

21 The enemy soldiers saw him advancing
like death personified,
pulversing all again and again,
and they became dispirited.

22 Whichever direction Bhīma turned his eyes
and swung his mace,
O Bharata, all the soldiers there
panicked and fled.

23 Like Antaka-Doom with gaping jaws
breaking through ranks
to devour enemy soldiers
with incredible physical energy,

24 Wolf-waisted Bhīma with his mahā-mace
wrought havoc;
seeing this, mighty Bhīṣma sped forward
to check him.

25 He advanced in a dazzling mahā-chariot
whose wheels roared like storm-clouds,
and he showered arrows
as Parjanya-Indra downpours rain.

26 Seeing Bhīṣma bearing down on him
like wide-mouthed Antaka-Death personified,
mahā-muscled Bhīma, roused to fury,
counter-charged.

27 Precisely that time,
Sātyaki the Śini
attacked Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
and tormented your army
with his excellent foe-
annihilating bow.

28 And your troops, O Bharata,
reeled under the charge
of the silver-white steeds
of his excellent chariot,
from whose cover he fired
sharp, lovely-winged arrows.

29 Alambuṣa the rākṣasa
attempted to stop him
with only ten arrows,
but the grandson of Śini
fired four of his own,
and continued to advance.

30 Observing the steady,
relentless approach
of Sātyaki, who traumatised
the chiefs of your army
with brilliant manoeuvres
and piercing war-cries,

31 Your soldiers fired sheets
of arrows at him,
like torrents of rain
drenching a mountain,
but he shone like the sun
in irresistible radiance.

32 O rājā, then
not one in your army
was hopeful, not one
not desponding,
save the son of Somadatta,
mahātmā Bhūriśravas.

33 Seeing his friends in despair,
he gripped his bow, and charged
headlong at Sātyaki.

SECTION SIXTY-FOUR

1 O rājā (Sañjaya continued),
Bhūriśravas, enraged,
like a mahout goading an elephant,
wounded Sātyaki with nine arrows.

2 In everyone's presence,
confident-ātmaned Sātyaki
immediately pinned down Bhūriśravas,
with vicious, knotted arrows.

3 And rājā Duryodhana and his brothers
quickly surrounded
the hard-pressed son of Somadatta, Bhūriśravas,
for his protection.

4 The Pāṇḍavas, too, swiftly encircled Sātyaki
and prepared
for the terrible battle
that would follow.

5 Bhīma, enraged, on the Pāṇḍava side,
opposed, O Bharata,
with his uplifted mace, your sons
led by Duryodhana himself.

6 Reinforced by thousands of chariots,
and livid with fury,
your son Nandaka
wounded mahā-powerful Bhīma

7 With six stone-sharpened
kaṅka-feathered arrows.
Infuriated Duryodhana wounded
mahā-chariot-hero Bhīma

8 In the chest with nine excellent arrows.
Impossibly mahā-powerful mahā-muscled Bhīma
quickly climbed
into his chariot,

9 That finest of all chariots,
and said to his charioteer Viśoka:
"All the valiant mahā-chariot-hero sons
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra

10 Are trying to kill me
in a frenzy of frustration.
A desire cherished in my heart
for many years,

11 I will fulfil today.
I can see all the brothers in one place.
Where clouds of dust are swirling
from chariot-wheels,

12 Obscuring the sky and the directions,
there rājā Suyodhana-Duryodhana,
encased in his shining armour,
waits,

13 Together with his blood- and uterine-brothers.
Today,
in front of your eyes,
I will definitely kill them all.

14 Charioteer, take care
you handle the reins well."
Saying this, Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Bhīma
aimed at your son

15 Ten sharp arrows that were decorated
with gold filigree,
and wounded Nandaka in the chest
with three arrows.

16 Duryodhana countered mahā-powerful Bhīma
with sixty arrows,
and wounded Viśoka
with three keen-tipped arrows.

17 Smiling as he did so, O rājā,
Duryodhana neatly
sliced the glittering bow of Bhīma
with three sharp arrows.

18 Wolf-waisted Bhīma saw his charioteer
in distress
as a result of the exquisite bow-skill
of Duryodhana,

19 And, unable to stand the humiliation,
he lifted, mahārāja,
a celestial bow, O bull-brave Bharata,
to kill your son.

20 In a fury of uncontrollable rage,
he fitted
a horse-shoe-headed arrow
and sliced Duryodhana's bow.

21 Your son was livid readied fury;
he threw aside
the shattered bow and took another –
a much stronger one.

22 Stringing a *viśikha* arrow
that resembled the fatal rod of Kāla-mṛtyu,
your son fired straight
into Bhīma's chest.

23 The arrow hit;
the impact threw Bhīma off-balance;
he slumped in his chariot,
feeling faint and dizzy.

24 The shame of Bhīma's collapse
was unendurable
for the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes
headed by Abhimanyu.

25 That was the signal for these heroes
to inundate your son
with a torrential arrow-shower,
fired systematically.

26 In the meantime, mahā-powerful Bhīma,
recovering consciousness,
wounded Duryodhana first with three arrows,
then with five.

27 Then Pāṇḍu's son, the indefatigable bowman
valiant Bhīma,
fired twentyfive gold-feathered arrows at Śalya,
who fled.

28 Your fourteen sons then jointly attacked Bhīma –
Senāpati, Suṣeṇa, Jalasaṁdha, Sulocana,

29 Ugra, Bhīmaratha, Bhīma, Vīrabāhu, Ālolupa,
Durmukha, Duṣpradharṣa, Vivitsu, Vikaṭa, Sama.

30 Their eyes copper-bright with indignation,
they rushed at Bhīma,
wounding him with a multiplicity
of arrows.

31 Mahā-powerful Bhīma saw your sons
and started
licking the corners of his mouth,
like a wolf surrounded by small beasts.

32 The mahā-powerful Pāṇḍava Bhīma,
swooping like Garuḍa,
swiftly severed Senāpati's head
with a horse-shoe arrow.

33 Laughing, with supreme ease,
with three arrows
mahā-muscled Bhīma despatched Jalasaṁdha
to Yama's abode.

34 Next he sent Suṣeṇa to the realm of death.
The head of Ugra,
handsomely helmeted,
shining like the moon,

35 With exquisite ear-rings,
was severed with a flat-headed arrow;
it rolled on the ground. With seventy arrows,
Virābāhu, his horses and charioteer,

36 Were next killed by Bhīma
on the field of battle.
Then, smiling, Bhīma sent
Bhīma and Bhīmaratha,

37 Your two sons, O rājā, to the abode of death.
In front of all
on that horrendous site of slaughter,
Bhīma despatched Sulocana,

38 With the whole army as witness,
to Yama's abode.
Your other sons present,
seeing these exploits of Bhīma,

39 Were stupefied; as they wondered, O rājā,
mahā-ātmaned Bhīma attacked them,
and they ran helter-skelter
from the field.

40 Then Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
addressed the mahā-chariot-heroes:
"Our mahā-chariot-heroes on the field,
by angry Bhīma

41 Are routed, though they are expert in arms,
confident, and valiant.
March forward and teach Bhīma
a lesson!"

42 These words of Bhīṣma stimulated the wrath
of the soldiers
of Duryodhana,
and they attacked mahā-powerful Bhīma.

43 O lord of the earth! It was Bhagadatta,
riding an elephant
with rut-streaming temples,
who was the first to attack Bhīma.

44 It was he who fired such a thick volley
of stone-sharpened arrows
that shaft-clouds impenetrably
obscured Bhīma-sun.

45 The mahā-chariot-heroes under the command
of Abhimanyu –
all proud of their strength –
could not tolerate this humiliation;

46 So they formed a pincer movement
against Bhagadatta,
drowning him and his elephant
under torrents of arrows.

47 Pierced by the showers of weapons
that fell on it,
that elephant of the ruler of the Prāgjyotiṣas,
O rājā,

48 With blood streaning down its hide,
lumbered on the field
like a dark mahā-rain-cloud
painted with sunlight.

49 Its rutting juices streaming,
goaded by king Bhagadatta,
it charged like Antaka-doom
despatched by Kāla.

50 It doubled its speed,
the earth shook where it sped.
All the mahā-chariot-heroes,
seeing the charging monster,

51 And realising it could not be controlled,
despaired and panicked.
In a fury,
Bhagadatta wounded Bhīma's chest

52 With a twisted knot-arrow. Mahārāja,
the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīma,
pierced by the arrow
of Bhagadatta,

53 Felt faint, and clutched at his flagstaff
for support.
Seeing the other heroes dazed,
and Bhīma near-unconscious,

54 The illustrious warrior Bhagadatta
screamed his war-cry.
Noticing Bhīma's precarious condition,
the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,

55 Of horrific appearance, roused to fierce anger,
suddenly seemed to vanish.
What a terrible coward-quaking māyā
he created!

56 The next instant he assumed
a macabre form,
and appeared through māyā-power
to be riding on Airāvata,
the elephant of Vajrapāṇi-Indra
with hide white as Kailāsa snow.

57 He was followed by the other elephants –
guards of the four directions –
Añjana, Vāmana,
and Mahāpadma.

58 Riding on each of these three elephants, O rājā,
was a rākṣasa;
the temples of these colossal elephants streamed
with rutting juice.

59 They were mahā-powerful, fleet of foot,
and mahā-formidable.
Ghatoṭkaca goaded his elephant
to lead the attack;

60 Foe-crushing Ghatoṭkaca wished to kill Bhagadatta
along with Bhagadatta's elephant.
Goaded by mahā-powerful rākṣasas,
the other elephants,

61 Each four-tusked, lumbered from four sides
on the elephant of Bhagadatta,
lunging and plunging
with their tusks.

62 Arrow-pierced, tusk-gored, mortally wounded,
the elephant of Bhagadatta trumpeted;
the noise resembled the noise
of Indra's thunderbolt.

63 Bhīṣma heard the agonised screaming
of the beast and,
turning to rājā Suyodhana-Duryodhana and Droṇa,
he said:

64 "The mahā-bowman Bhagadatta is caught
in the coils
of ill-ātmaned Haiḍimba-Ghaṭotkaca.
He is in great peril.

65 This rākṣasa is horrendous,
and the rājā is infuriated.
One is Death, and the other, it seems, is Kāla
on the battlefield.

66 Listen! We can hear the victory mahā-shouts
of the Pāṇḍavas
and the screaming anguish of the elephant
of Bhagadatta.

67 May success go with you!
Let us now reinforce rājā Bhagadatta,
for without our protection,
he is sure to be killed.

68 Make haste, mahā-warriors!
No time to lose!
This horrendous, horripilating clash
worsens each instant.

69 King Bhagadatta is of noble lineage,
he is courageous and loyal.
Brave ones,
it is right that we save him!"

70 Listening to the advice of Bhīṣma,
the mahā-chariot-heroes,
under the leadership of Droṇa,
to save Bhagadatta,

71 Formed serried ranks,
and proceeded to the site of battle.
Seeing them advance,
the forces headed by Yudhiṣṭhira –

72 The Pāñcālas and the Pāṇḍavas –
pursued from behind.
Seeing the two armies approach,
the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca

73 Emitted an ear-splitting yell
that sounded like thunder.
Hearing the scream
and seeing the advancing war-elephants,

74 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma said
to Bharadvāja's son Droṇa:
"I have no desire to fight the ill-ātmaned
Ghaṭotkaca, Hiḍimbā's son.

75 He is enormously powerful, he is brave,
he has strong help.
He cannot be defeated
even by thunder-wielding Indra.

76 He knows his targets, he never misses;
our beasts are tired,
we have been mauled
in our Pāṇḍava-Pāñcāla encounter.

77 There is no point
in continuing battling the Pāṇḍavas.
Order retreat! Tomorrow we shall fight
once again."

78 Hearing these words of Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
harassed by Ghaṭotkaca,
the Kauravas gladly complied
with his order.

79 The withdrawal of the Kauravas prompted
the Pāṇḍavas
to shout war-cries and blow trumpets
and conches.

80 That was how, O bull-brave Bharata,
the battle raged
that day between the Pāṇḍavas
and the Kauravas.

81 At night, ashamed of their defeat
at the hands of the Pāṇḍavas,
the Kauravas retired
to their camp.

82 The mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍavas also retired.
Their hearts were joyful,
though their bodies were bruised
and shaken.

83 They stationed Bhīma and Ghaṭotkaca
at their head, mahārāja,
and marched back,
offering them pūjā-respect.

84 Their war-cries blended
with the noise of their trumpets,
and their praise mingled
with the blare of their conches.

85 Shouting lion-roars and shaking the earth,
O honour-bestowing monarch,
with their triumphal march,
the mahātmā warriors frightened your sons.

86 At night those foe-smiters
relaxed in their tents.
But Duryodhana, agitated by the slaughter
of his brothers,

87 Grieved and wept – and ruminated.
He planned the arrangements
for passing the night,
after which he was pensive again,
mourning the loss
of so many of his brothers.

SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

1 "Sañjaya," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"when I hear of the Pāṇḍavas' feats,
excelling those of gods,
I am filled with fear and wonder.

2 And when I hear of the humiliation
of my sons, Sañjaya,
I become anxious; I think:
How is this going to end?

3 And Vidura's prophecy haunts me –
all that he said,
by the yoga of fate, is coming true, Sañjaya,
in each detail.

4 There are splendid warriors in the army
of the Pāṇḍavas
who match the heroic and experienced warriors
of Bhīṣma.

5 What makes the mahā-powerful mahātmā Pāṇḍavas
so immune?
What boon have they received?
Tāta! Dear one! What knowledge is theirs?

6 Why are they as unfading as the stars
in the sky?
I cannot tolerate this murder of my armies
by the Pāṇḍavas.

7 A ferocious fate is punishing me.
Why are the Pāṇḍavas
so unkillable, and my sons
so vulnerable?

8 Sañjaya, I must have the answers
to these questions.
I know of no way to overcome
my grief,

9 Just as a bare-armed swimmer has no way
to cross the mahā-ocean.
My sons are facing the greatest peril
of their lives.

10 I have a feeling Bhīma will kill them;
I know he will.
I can think of no warrior, not one,
on the battlefield

11 Who can rescue them now.
Sañjaya, my sons are doomed.
The strength of the Pāṇḍavas,
the cause of our weakness –

12 Please answer whatever questions
I now put to you.
What did Duryodhana do
when his troops fled?

13 Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Kṛpa, Śakuni, Jayadratha,
The mahā-bowman Aśvatthāman, mahā-powerful
Vikarṇa –

14 What did they do? O mahā-wise Sañjaya,
what did these mahā-ātmaned warriors do
when my sons
fled the field?"

15 O rājā! Listen to me carefully
(replied Sañjaya),
and think it over. It was not mantras,
it was not māyā.

16 The Pāṇḍavas created no new horrors.
They are strong, O rājā:
they used their *śakti* in battle fairly;
that is all.

17 O Bharata! Kuntī's sons seek mahā-glory,
so whatever they do –
even their life's smallest activities –
is done according to dharma.

18 They do not shirk duty in battle.
They are mahā-powerful, and they follow dharma.
They are Śrī-dedicated.
Where dharma is, victory is.

19 That is why they cannot be routed,
why victory is theirs always.
Your ill-ātmaned sons
go in far misdeeds;

20 They are cruel, and mean;
that is why they lose. O lord of men,
they were maliciously unjust
and vindictive

21 To the Pāṇḍavas;
they behave like men of low birth.
Overlooking all these offences
committed by your sons,

22 Pāṇḍu's sons did their best to ignore the mischief,
  O lord of the world,
and keep it unknown,
  and yet your sons never respected them.

23 O lord of men,
  there is a price to pay
for incessant wrong-doing,
  a mahā-bitter fruit to reap.

24 Mahārāja, you must taste that fruit now too,
  because you, O rājā –
you refused to act on the advice
  of your well-wishers.

25 You were warned by mahātmā Droṇa,
  by Vidura,
by me, and by Bhīṣma.
  You did not listen.

26 You were like a sick man rejecting medicine
  when you spurned our words.
You thought with your sons
  to crush the Pāṇḍavas.

27 Let me tell you exactly
  why the Pāṇḍavas are sure to win,
for this, O excellent Bharata,
  is what you want to know.

28 I will tell it to you exactly
  as I heard it.
O foe-crushers! Duryodhana asked Bhīṣma
  precisely this question.

29 After the rout of his mahā-chariot-hero brothers
  on the battlefield,
his heart overflowing with grief,
  at dead of night,

30 He humbly approached mahā-wise Pitāmaha Bhīṣma.
  O lord of men!
Let me repeat to you what your son
  said to him.

31 Duryodhana said:
"You, Droṇa, Śalya, Kṛpa, Aśvatthāman,
Hṛdīka's son Kṛtavarman,
Sudakṣiṇa of the Kāmbojas,

32 The valiant Bhūriśravas, Vikarṇa and Bhagadatta –
These nobly-descended mahā-chariot-heroes are
always ready to die.

33 I think they are competent to fight
the three worlds,
yet they failed to repulse
the Pāṇḍava offensive.

34 I am uneasy about this;
I am filled with doubts.
Who is it whose help makes the Pāṇḍavas win?
Tell me."

35 "Listen carefully, Kaurava," replied Bhīṣma.
"How many times before
did I tell you the same thing –
you never listened, O rājā.

36 O excellent Bharata!
Make peace with the Pāṇḍavas;
it will benefit you,
it will benefit the world.

37 You can still enjoy, with much happiness,
this earth;
you can still please your relatives and others,
O rājā.

38 I kept insisting –
but you never cared to listen.
Now you suffer for the wrongs
you did the Pāṇḍavas.

39 O mahā-muscled ruler, *prabhu*-lord,
learn why the never ill-doing Pāṇḍavas
will never come
to any harm.

40 There was not, is not,
and there will never be any person
to defeat the Pāṇḍavas, protected by Hari-Krishna,
the Śārṅga-bow wielder,
whom neither gods, anti-gods, nor men
can fully know.

41 You who know dharma, *tāta*, dear one,
let me tell you
what the serene-ātmaned munis say
about this *purāṇa-gītā*.

42 In the ancient past,
the gods and ṛṣis assembled
on Gandhamādana mountain
to revere Brahmā Pitāmaha.

43 Sitting in the centre, lord-of-creatures
Prajāpati-Brahmā
noticed a chariot as if aflame
suspended in space.

44 Obtaining insight through meditation,
Brahmā, with ecstatic ātman,
did *añjali* and *namaskāra* to Puruṣa Parameśvara,
the Supreme Divinity.

45 The gods and ṛṣis also saw
the mahā-marvellous vision
and, standing with Brahmā,
offered their *añjali*.

46 Knower-of-prime-dharma, best-of-Veda-knowers,
creator-of-the-worlds Brahmā,
chanted this praise
of the vision:

47 'Glory of the universe!
Image of the universe!
Lord of the universe!
Protector of the universe!
Controller of the universe!
Supreme God of the universe!
Vāsudeva!
Redeem me, Yogātman divinity!

48 Victory to you,
O world Mahādeva!
Victory to you,
O world benefactor!
Victory to you,
O Lord of yogis!
Victory to you,
O beginning and end of Yoga!

49 Born-of-the-lotus,
Padmagarbha,
victory to you!
Large-eyed divinity,
lord of the lords of the universe,
victory to you!
Lord of the past,
of the present and future,
victory to you!
Self-born divinity,
serene avatāra,
victory to you!

50 Lord of numerous guṇas,
ultimate redeemer,
victory to you!
Nārāyaṇa ineffable,
Śārṅga-bow-wielder,
victory to you!

51 Image of the universe,
all-guṇa-deity,
victory to you!
Mahā-powerful
lord of the universe,
defect-free divinity,
Divinity devoted
to the universe's welfare,
victory to you!

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52 Mahā Cosmic Serpent! Mahoraga!
Mighty Boar avatāra!
Harikeśa!
  Victory to you!
Saffron-robed one! Harivāsa!
Abode of the universe! Diśāmīśa!
Infinite Deity!
Undecaying one!
  Victory to you!

53 Manifested one!
Unmanifested one!
Sense-disciplined deity!
Truth-practising divinity!
Self-knowing one!
Immeasurable one!
Profundity itself!
Fulfiller of desires!
  Victory to you!

54 Endless!
Eternal!
Granter of prosperity!
  O Brahman!
Ever-successful!
All-knowing!
Percipient in dharma!
  Always victorious!

55 Yogātman divinity!
O heart of mystery!
O Lord of all that is!
Lord of the universe!
Lord of the truths of the worlds!
  Victory to you!

56 Self-born divinity!
Mahā-favoured of fortune!
Destroyer of the *kalpa*!
Inspirer of the mind!
Beloved Brahman of the seekers of truth!
  Victory to you!

57 Creator and destroyer!
Discipliner of desire!
Primary deity, Parameśvara!
Origin of *amṛta*!
Basis of truth!
Granter of victory!
Freer of the ātman!

58 Lord of Prajāpati!
Lotus-navelled divinity!
Padmanābha!
Mahā-powerful divinity!
O self-created Ātman!
O Mahā-Form of reality!
Victory to you!

59 Your feet
the earth devī!
Your arms
the coördinates of space!
Your head
the region of heaven!
Your image
I, Brahmā!
Your limbs
the gods!
Your eyes
the sun and the moon!

60 Your strength
truth and tapasyā!
Your face
dharma and karma!
Your energy
fire!
Your breath
wind!
Your sweat
water!

61 Your ears
the twin Aśvins!
Your tongue
Sarasvatī devī
goddess of learning!
Your rituals of saṁskāra
the Vedas!
And in you
is the world stable!

62 We are ignorant
of your measure of greatness
We are ignorant
of your energy and radiance
of your strength and origin
O lord of yoga and yogīs!

63 Deva! O divine one!
We offer you bhakti!
We follow the ways of your sacred path!
Viṣṇu!
We worship the Supreme Lord Parameśa!
We worship the Deity-above-all Maheśvara!

64 Ṛṣis
Gods
Gandharvas
Yakṣas
Rākṣasas
Pannagas
Piśācas
Humans
Animals
Birds
Reptiles

65 Are all created by me
through your grace!
Lotus-navelled one!
Large-eyed one!
Krishna!
Remover of sorrows!

66 You are the goal of all creatures!
You are the leader!
O world-guru!
You are the joy of the gods!
Your grace brings them bliss!

67 By your grace, O divine one, deva,
is the earth redeemed.
O large-eyed one,
be the cause of Yādava prosperity!

68 Listen to my prayer, O radiant one!
Accept my prayer, Lord,
And make dharma firm,
Destroy the Dānavas,
Make stable the earth!

69 O Vāsudeva!
O fulfilled lord of the worlds!
This song I sing
Of your ineffable mystery
Is the fruit of your grace!

70 O Krishna!
You created the divine Saṁkarṣaṇa
Out of your ātman;
And then you created Pradyumna
Out of your ātman;

71 From Pradyumna you created Aniruddha
Whom the learned know as undecaying Viṣṇu;
And it was Aniruddha who created me,
Brahmā, the sustainer of the worlds.

72 I have been created by you!
I partake of the essence of Vāsudeva!
Divide yourself into four again, O radiant one,
And be born in the world of humans.

73 For the happiness of the worlds,
For the destruction of anti-gods,
For the establishment of dharma,
For accomplishing glory,
perform this yoga in the world of humans.

74 O Primary Ātman! Paramātmakam!
Brahmā-ṛṣis and gods
Sing your praises
In your multiplicity of names.

75 O handsome-armed!
You are the granter of boons,
All seek refuge in you,
You are the shelter of all.
Brahmins praise you as the hub of the universe,
Possesser of infinite yoga-energy,
Divinity without beginning, middle, or end.' "

SECTION SIXTY-SIX

1 Bhīṣma continued:
"The Lord of the lord of the worlds,
Bhagavān Deva,
Affectionately and profoundly,
Replied to Brahmā:

2 'Through the power of my yoga,
I know what you desire. *Tāta*, dear devotee,
Your wish shall be granted.'
Saying this, he vanished.

3 The gods, ṛṣis, and gandharvas
were filled with wonder;
their curiosity made them enquire
of Brahmā Pitāmaha:

4 'Who was it, O radiant one,
To whom you offered *praṇāma*
With so much humility
And praised so highly?
We are eager to know.'

5 Bhagavān Pitāmaha Brahmā
replied pleasingly
to the gods, Brahma-ṛṣis, and gandharvas
in these words:

6 '*Tat*: That.
Supreme.
Was, is, shall be.
Ātman of creatures.
Prabhu Lord.
Brahman.
The Final Goal.

7 Such is the blissful Being
with whom I was talking.
I prayed to the lord of the world
to favour earth

8 By taking birth there and be known
as Vāsudeva:
Be born on earth in order to destroy
the anti-gods.

9 For Daityas and Dānavas and rākṣasas
who were killed in battle
have taken monstrous births
as humans.

10 Enormously powerful Bhagavān
shall roam the earth
in human form:
Nārāyaṇa in the company of Nara.

11 For Nara-Nārāyaṇa together
cannot be overcome in battle
even by the gods
united against them.

12 The two ancient ṛṣis Nara and Nārāyaṇa
will take birth on earth,
and only utter fools
will fail to recognise them.

13 The supreme lord of all the worlds,
Sarva-loka-maheśvara,
Vāsudeva, whose eldest son I, Brahmā, am,
deserves your worship.

14 O excellent gods, you who are powerful,
who carry conch, *cakra* and mace,
remember never to say,
"He's a mere man."

15 Supreme mystery.
Supreme goal.
Supreme Brahman.
Supreme glory.
That is what he is.

16 Undeteriorating.
Unmanifest.
Eternal.
Sung as the Puruṣa.
Known by none.
That is what he is.

17 Supreme energy.
Supreme happiness.
Supreme truth.
So sung by the World-Artificer Viśvakarman.
That is what he is.

18 That is why infinitely powerful Vāsudeva
should never be described
by men and Indra-led gods as
"He's a mere man."

19 He's a fool who calls Hṛṣīkeśa
a mere man;
such a fool is the lowest of men,
for he belittles divinity.

20 Vāsudeva is a mahātmā who by yogic power
is born in the world;
stupid indeed is the man
who does not know this.

21 Wise men call that person truly stupid
who does not see
that the moving-unmoving *śrīvatsa*-marked one
is lotus-born Viṣṇu.

22 Whoever maligns Kirīṭin the diademed one
and the mahātmā
Kaustubha-wearing protector of friends,
is flung into the deepest darkness of *tamas*.

23 O excellent gods, everyone who has knowledge
of these truths
should do *namaskāra* to Vāsudeva,
lord of the lords of the worlds.'

24 Saying this to the gods (continued Bhīṣma).
and the ṛṣis,
the Bhagavān Ātman of all creatures
retired to his abode.

25 The gods, gandharvas, sages, apsarās,
after listening
to the words of Brahmā,
joyfully left for heaven.

26 *Tata*! Child! This is what I heard
from learned ṛṣis
who were discussing Vāsudeva
in one of their gatherings.

27 I heard the same
from Jamadagni's son Paraśurāma,
from wise Mārkaṇḍeya, O bull-brave Bharata,
and from Vyāsa and Nārada.

28 I am now convinced that mahātmā Vāsudeva
Is the undecaying Lord above all lords,
That he is Krishna,
That Krishna is Nārāyaṇa,
That *Prabhu* Krishna is all, O bull-brave Bharata.

29 Why should people not worship Vāsudeva
From whose ātman was born Brahmā
The father of the universe?

30 *Tāta*! Child! In the past you were warned
By Veda-wise sages:
'Avoid clashing with bow-wielding Krishna

31 And the Pāṇḍavas.'
You foolishly chose not to understand what they said.
Your ignorance is so complete,
I think you are nothing but a ruthless rākṣasa.

32 That must be the reason you hate
Govinda-Krishna and Pāṇḍu's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Would any human despise
The divine pair Nara-Nārāyaṇa?

33 Let me repeat, O rājā:
Krishna is
  eternal
  undecaying
  the image of the universe
  unchanging
  the ruler
  the creator
  the sustainer

34 Guru of moving and unmoving life
Absolute Lord of the three worlds
Warrior
Victory
The Victorious One
Lord of all nature . . .

35 He is unstained by *tamas,* O rājā.
He is free from imperfection.
  Where Krishna is,
  Dharma is;
  Where Dharma is,
  Victory is.

36 O rājā! By his transcendent power,
By the yoga of his ātman,
  He supports the Pāṇḍavas
  And ensures their victory.

37 He inspires the intelligence
of the Pāṇḍavas
And the intelligence
ensures their prosperity
He gives them strength
on the battlefield
He always protects them
from danger

38 Eternal
Deity
Auspicious
Such is Vāsudeva
Ubiquitous
Such is Vāsudeva
About whom you asked, O Bharata.

39 Adored differently by
Brahmins
Kṣatriyas
Vaiśyas
Śūdras
According to the karma of each

40 He is the Deity
Sung by Saṁkarṣaṇa
At the end of the Dvāpara-yuga
And the beginning of the Kali-yuga –
This is Krishna
Saviour of his devotees

41 In yuga after yuga
Again and again
Krishna-Vāsudeva
In the worlds of the gods
The world of mortals
The sea-encircled cities
The land-locked hinterland."

SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN

1 "In all the worlds," said Duryodhana,
"Mahā-Vāsudeva excels.
Tell me, Pitāmaha, about his origin
and glory."

2 Bhīṣma replied: "O bull-brave Bharata!
Mahā-Vāsudeva excels.
He is the God of gods.
He is the Lotus-Eyed One
Unparalleled.

3 Mārkaṇḍeya has mahā-wonderful words
About Govinda-Krishna –
He is the Ātman of all ātmans,
He is the Mahātmā,
He is Puruṣottama,
The Supreme Personality.

4 He created
Water
Air
Fire
After creating Pṛthivī Devī the Earth Goddess
The Lord of all the worlds Sarva-lokeśvara Pṛabhu

5 Deva Mahātmā Puruṣottama
Relaxed on the waters
Indrawing all his energies
By the power of his yoga

6 From the mouth of the immaculate one came
Fire
From his breath
Wind
From his mouth
Sarasvatī
goddess of learning
and the Vedas

7 First he created
the worlds
the gods
the ṛṣis
Then
decay and death
growth and birth

8 He is
Dharma
He is
the Dharma-knower
He is
the boon-granter
He is
the gratifier of desire
He is
the Doer
He is
the Deed
He is
the Primal God
He is
his own Lord

9 He created
Past
Present
Future
He created
the two *saṁdhyā*-twilights
of morning and evening
He is Janārdana the Punisher-of-people
He created the sky
the directions
the cosmic order

10 This undecaying mahātmā Govinda created
ṛṣis
tapasyā
He is the *prabhu* lord
He created
the creator of the worlds

11 He created
Saṁkarṣaṇa
the first-born life-essence
Out of which came
Nārāyaṇa Sanātana
the God of gods

12 From the navel of Nārāyaṇa
rose the Lotus of life
From the Lotus
rose Pitāmaha Brahmā
Primal Grandsire
Creator of the worlds

13 He is Śeṣa
who sustains
all the world's creatures
He holds the world steady
with all her hills and mountains
He is Ananta
omni-formed
sinuous supporter of life

14 Brahmins perceive his mahā-radiant divinity
With the help of the yoga of meditation.
The mahā-antigod Madhu
Born from the secretion in his ear –

15 An anti-god horrendous in malice
And horrendous in deed –
Was about to destroy Brahmā
When he was killed by Puruṣottama Krishna.

16 *Tāta*! Dear one!
That is why the gods, Dānavas, humans, and ṛṣis
Call Janārdana Madhusūdana, 'Slayer of Madhu.'

17 This is the Lord incarnated as
Boar
Man-Lion
Three-Worlds-Conquering Dwarf
This is Hari who is
Mother
Father
of all creatures

18 There was never
There is not now
There never will be
anyone superior
to the Lotus-eyed Lord.
From his mouth come
the Brahmins
From his arms
the Kṣatriyas

19 From his thighs
the Vaiśyas
From his legs
the Śūdras.
O rājā! Those who control their bodies
with severe tapasyā

20 On the *amāvāsyā* fortnight
And the full moon fortnight of *pūrṇimā*
And meditate on Keśava who is Yoga-personified
achieve mahā-fulfilment.

21 O world-ruler!
Keśava is the all-worlds Pitāmaha
He is the primal energy
Ṛṣis know him as
Hṛṣīkeśa, the Lord of the senses.

22 Know him as
Ācārya
Father
Guru
Whom Krishna favours
achieves
the undecaying abode

23 Who seeks Keśava
in times of fear
Who sings his praises
spontaneously
Is blessed with happiness and prosperity

24 Those who shelter in Krishna
are never deceived
Those who seek the shelter of Janārdana
are never refused

25 Knowing all this, O Bharata rājā,
Yudhiṣṭhira
with his whole ātman
Seeks the grace of Keśava mahātmā
lord of yoga
lord of the worlds
the Supreme God."

SECTION SIXTY-EIGHT

1 "Mahārāja,
Listen to my song of praise," said Bhīṣma,
"Sung by Brahmā himself in the past
And repeated before humans
By gods and Brahma-ṛṣis.

2 Lord of the gods and Sādhyas,
God above all other gods,
Knower of the innermost heart,
Protector of people –
So Nārada chants your praises.

3 You are the past, present, and future,
Sings Mārkaṇḍeya,
You are the Yajña of all yajñas,
The Tapasyā above all tapasyās.

4 You are the God above all gods,
Sings Bhagavān Bhṛgu,
You are the Ancient and Shining Viṣṇu,

5 You are the Vāsudeva of the Vāsus.
Sings island-born Dvaipāyana Vyāsa,
The strength behind Śakra-Indra,
The God of gods.

6 You were the lord of creation Dakṣa
In the distant past
When creation commenced;
You are the creator of all,
Sings Aṅgiras.

7 You are the Form Unmanifested,
You are the Concept Manifested,
Sing Devala and Asita;
You are the Creator of the gods.

8 Your head
covers sky and space
Your arms
sustain the earth
Your stomach
holds the three worlds
You are the Eternal Puruṣa personified.

9 Purified by tapasyā,
People know you as such.
To the ṛṣis who have darshan of the ātman,
You are the only Reality.

10 Madhusūdana,
You are the succour of the rāja-ṛṣis
The unflinching ones
Who perform all dharmas serenely.

11 Such is the song of praise
In adoration of Bhagavān Puruṣottama-Hari-Krishna,
Uttered by the yoga-knowing sages
Headed by Sanatkumāra.

12 *Tāta!* Child! Duryodhana, I have given you
briefly and in detail,
an account of Keśava.
Lovingly, adore Krishna."

13 Mahārāja (continued Sañjaya), your son,
having listened
to this sacred account,
began to think highly of Keśava
and the Pāṇḍava
mahā-chariot-heroes.

14 Then, O rājā, Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
said to Duryodhana:
"You have heard from me
about mahātmā Keśava's glory

15 And Nara's about which
you had wanted to know, O king.
You know now why the ṛṣis Nara-Nārāyaṇa
have taken birth on earth.

16 You know now why these two heroes
are invincible,
why they remain undefeated,
and why Pāṇḍu's sons cannot be killed, O rājā.

17 Krishna has an adamantine affection
for the Pāṇḍavas; that is why.
Therefore, O Indra-among rājās,
make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.

18 Keep your mind disciplined,
realise they are your brothers,
share the kingdom with them.
Do not provoke the divine pair Nara-Nārāyaṇa"

19 Having said this, your father Bhīṣma kept silent,
O lord of the world.
Taking leave of rājā Duryodhana,
he returned to his tent.

20 O bull-brave Bharata!
Rājā Duryodhana retired
to his tent after *praṅāma-ing* mahā-ātmaned Bhīṣma,
and slept that night on a white bed.

SECTION SIXTY-NINE

1 Night passed, the day-making sun rose
(continued Sañjaya)
and the two armies advanced, mahārāja,
for another battle.

2 They faced each other
in serried rank upon rank;
reckless with hate, they were bent
on mutual slaughter.

3 It was your wrong policy, O rājā,
that impelled
the Pāṇḍavas and Dhṛtarāṣṭrans
to self-destruction.

4 O rājā! Bhīṣma stationed his army
in the *makara*-crocodile formation.
Pāṇḍu's sons also prepared
their defence.

5 Acting on advice from the sage Dhaumya,
foe-less Ajataśatru-Yudhiṣṭhira
organised the hawk-strategy
for the impending battle.

6 He was familiar with the hawk-shape arrangement
of sticks in a funeral pyre.
Your son, O Bharata,
chose the crocodile-strategy.

7 He acted on the advice of Droṇa
in the strategic positioning
of his army, leaving the leadership
to Bhīṣma.

8 Mahārāja, your *pitā* Devavrata-Bhīṣma,
that supreme-chariot-hero,
then advanced with a huge host
of chariots.

9 He was followed by foot-soldiers,
chariot-heroes,
cavalry men and elephant-warriors
marching in perfect precision.

10 Observing their enemy prepared for battle,
the Pāṇḍavas marched
in the impregnable strategy
of the hawk-*vyūha*,

11 Whose beak was the mahā-powerful,
resplendent Bhīma,
whose eyes were Śikhaṇḍin
and undefeatable Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

12 Whose head was the truth-firm hero
Sātyaki himself,
whose neck was Pārtha-Arjuna,
wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow.

13 Mahātmā Śrīmān Drupada and his son,
with an entire
akṣauhiṇī of warriors,
comprised its left wing.

14 Kekaya, commanding another *akṣauhiṇī,*
comprised the right.
Draupadī's sons and valiant Abhimanyu
were its back;

15 Respect-radiant Śrīmān Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
supported by his twin brothers
Nakula and Sahadeva,
formed the hawk's tail.

16 The battle commenced.
Bhīma, penetrating the crocodile mouth
of the Kauravas,
rained arrows on Bhīṣma.

17 In that mahā-clash
Bhīṣma released many mahā-weapons
which dazed the army
of the sons of Pāṇḍu.

18 While the Pāṇḍava ranks were recovering
from the shock,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna speedily shot a thousand arrows
at Bhīṣma.

19 Arjuna succeeded in neutralising
Bhīṣma's surprise attack,
and confidently prepared to launch
a counter-offensive.

20 Incomparably powerful rājā Duryodhana,
recalling the rout
of his warriors,
approached Bharadvāja's son Droṇa

21 (The slaughter of his brothers weighing on his mind),
and the mahā-chariot hero said,
"O fault-free ācārya,
you always wish my welfare.

22 With your and Pitāmaha Bhīṣma's help,
we are sure
that we can defeat even the gods
in battle,

23 Let alone the Pāṇḍavas,
who are mere playthings in your hands.
Bhadraṁ te! May you prosper!
Attack and kill the Pāṇḍavas."

24 Droṇa listened carefully to Duryodhana,
O honour-bestowing monarch,
sighed and irritatedly replied to your son
rājā Duryodhana:

25 "You are so ignorant.
You have no idea at all
of the mahā-powerful Pāṇḍavas.
They cannot be defeated.
Still, what strength and valour will do,
I will do."

26 O rājā! Saying this to your son,
ācārya Droṇa prepared for battle.
Before Satyaki's very eyes
he pierced the Pāṇḍava defences.

27 O Bharata descendant,
Sātyaki managed to block him.
The ensuing clash was fierce
and unbelievably gory.

28 The irate son of Bharadvāja, Droṇa,
furious but smiling,
wounded Sātyaki's shoulder joint
with sharp arrows.

29 Bhīma, roused, eager to rescue Sātyaki
from the finest-of-arms-wielders,
shot counter-arrows at Droṇa,
O honour-bestowing monarch.

30 That was the cue for Droṇa, Bhīṣma, and Śalya,
O honour-bestowing monarch,
to swamp Bhīma with a drenching swarm
of arrows.

31 This excited Abhimanyu
and the sons of Draupadī
to charge with lifted weapons
and wound the three warriors.

32 And Śikhaṇḍin ran forward to challenge
on the field
the mahā-might of Droṇa and Bhīṣma,
with his bow-skill.

33 With his tough bow
whose twang had the impact of thunder,
he shot arrows that obscured
the day-making sun itself.

34 The Pitāmaha of the Bharatas, Bhīṣma,
knowing that Śikhaṇḍin
was born a girl,
avoiding clashing with him.

35 It was then, mahārāja, that Droṇa,
ordered by your son,
rushed to the field
to protect Bhīṣma.

36 Śikhaṇḍin, awed by the arms-wielding prowess
of Droṇa,
avoided him as he would the fierce fires
at the end of a yuga.

37 Your son Duryodhana seized this opportunity
to gain mahā-fame,
O lord of the world,
and advanced to rescue Bhīṣma.

38 And the Pāṇḍavas, unwilling to forego this chance,
O rājā,
advanced also to win,
with Dhanañjaya-Arjuna leading them.

39 A gruesome mahā-incredible battle resulted,
similar to the war
between the gods and Dānavas,
with both determined to gain glory.

SECTION SEVENTY

1 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma (continued Sañjaya),
eager to dispel the fear
that Bhīma instilled in your sons,
fought brilliantly.

2 That morning, a brutal battle raged
between the rājās,
the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas;
countless heroes pershed.

3 The carnage continued fast and furious;
the tumultuous cacophony
rose so loud it seemed to touch
the mahā-sky-space itself.

4 Elephants trumpeting!
Horses whinnying!
Conches blaring!
Drums thudding!
– Ear-splitting noise!

5 The mahā-powerful warriors,
eager for quick conquest,
roared at each other,
like huge snorting bulls among cows.

6 O bull-brave Bharata!
Human heads,
sliced with razor-sharp arrows,
thudded on the field like hailstones.

7 Many lay there, O bull-brave Bharata,
on the battlefield,
glittering with ear-rings and head-trappings,
dazzling like gold.

8 The ground was scattered with legs
chopped off
by flat-headed arrows,
and with bracelet-decorated arms.

9 Bodies littered everywhere, glittering
and heaped over with armour,
braceleted arms,
pink-eyed moon-bright faces,

10 Corpses of elephants, horses, and men,
O earth-lord –
in the twinkling of a *muhūrta*
all the earth was covered.

11 Thick tumultuous dust-clouds.
Missiles streaking like lightning.
Bow-twangs thundering.

12 And soon, O descendant of Bharata,
that gory Kaurava-Pāṇḍava battle
produced a river of blood
flowing on the battlefield.

13 Giant mahā-terror.
Horror.
Horripilating confused encounters
Between incorrigible battle-brave Kṣatriyas
Shooting torrents of arrows.

14 Arrow-lacerated, the elephants of your army
and theirs, O bull-brave Bharata,
frenziedly fled and trumpeted
with uplifted trunks.

15 And the normally restrained warriors,
provoked to fury,
fired swift arrows – and the bow-twanging
was thunderously deafening.

16 Headless bodies stood erect
in that river of blood,
as other kings waded in
to kill their enemies.

17 Dead animals, chopped-off heads,
bows, maces, missiles of all kinds,
hands and even thighs of soldiers,
O Bharata,

18 Sliced legs, gleaming ornaments and war-bracelets
lay heaped on the field
during the encounter
between Bhīma and Bhīṣma.

19 Everywere, O lord of the world,
one saw crowds
of galloping horses and elephants
running amok.

20 Victims of Cosmic Time Kāla,
Kṣatriyas slaughtered each other
with maces, swords,
and knotted arrows.

21 Heroic veterans of numerous battles,
experienced in war-skills,
battered each other with bare arms
resembling steel bludgeons.

22 O lord of the world, your heroic soldiers
continued battling the Pāṇḍavas,
using clenched fists, palms,
knees and feet.

23 The fallen,
The about to fall,
The fallen and rolling on the ground in pain –
O lord of the earth, what a fearful spectacle!

24 Unchärioted chariot-heroes,
brandishing shining steel swords,
rushed madly at each other
with openly murderous looks.

25 Then rājā Duryodhana decided to launch
a direct attack on the Pāṇḍavas,
with a Kaliṅga host
led by Bhīṣma.

26 The Pāṇḍavas, riding swift animals
and engrossed in protecting Bhīma,
angrily waited to repulse
the aggression of Bhīṣma.

SECTION SEVENTY-ONE

1 Noticing his brother Bhīma and other Pāṇḍavas
(continued Sañjaya)
fighting Bhīṣma,
Arjuna attacked Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma.

2 We heard the Pāñcajanya conch blaring,
we heard the twang of his Gāṇḍīva bow,
we saw Arjuna's banner,
we were terrified.

3 Shaped like a lion's tail,
as splendid as a blazing hill,
rising clear above tall tree-tops,
flashing like a comet,

4 Multi-coloured and unforgettably picturesque,
that celestially crafted *vānara*-banner
of the Gāṇḍīva bow-wielder –
we saw it fluttering, mahārāja.

5 We saw the gold-engraved Gāṇḍīva bow
in that mahā-clash,
clear in the confusion,
like lightning in obscuring clouds.

6 We heard him, even as he struck down
your soldiers,
slapping his arm-pits and shouting,
as does Śakra-Indra.

7 He rained arrows in profusion
all around him,
like a rain-cloud releasing lightning,
thunder, and rain.

8 The target of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's attack
was Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma.
His weapons dazed us:
we could not tell east from west.

9 O bull-brave Bharata! In the prevailing chaos,
your soldiers, direction-less,
their animals dead, their minds dulled,
huddled for safety,

10 And left everything in the hands of Bhīṣma
and your sons.
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
became their refuge.

11 Bewildered chariot-heroes
fell out of their vehicles,
riders slipped off horses' backs,
soldiers collapsed where they stood.

12 The thunderous twang of the Gāṇḍīva bow,
O Bharata-descendant,
terrified your soldiers, and they broke ranks
and panicked.

13 It was then that the Kāmboja king Sudakṣiṇa
launched an attack
with thousands of swift horses
and crack Gopa warriors,

14 Supported by the Madras, Sauvīras, Gāndhāras,
the Trigartas,
and the ruler of the Kaliṅgas
with all his Kaliṅga heroes,

15 And king Jayadratha
along with many other rājās,
backed by a multi-racial division
headed by Duḥśāsana,

16 With fourteen thousand hand-picked
cavalry warriors.
These, ordered by your son, converged on
and guarded Śubala's son Śakuni.

17 The excellent Bharata heroes, your sons,
O bull-brave Bharata,
driving splendid chariots, began systematically
attacking Arjuna.

18 Meanwhile, the Cedi and Kāśī warriors
and the Pāñcāla
and Sṛñjaya chariot-heroes
led by Dhṛṣṭadyumna and the Pāṇḍavas,
advanced on orders
from Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

19 Cloudy swirls of kicked-up dust,
raised by chariot-heroes,
horses, and foot-soldiers,
added to the terrifying confusion.

20 Supported by a huge force of elephants,
chariot-heroes and cavalry
with lances and darts,
Bhīṣma attacked-Kirīṭin-Arjuna.

21 The ruler of Avanti clashed
with the Kāśī rājā,
Bhīma with the ruler of Sindhu Jayadratha.
Ajātaśatru-Yudhiṣṭhira

22 And his ministers and sons
fought illustrious Śalya of the Madras.
Vikarṇa clashed with Sahadeva,
and Citrasena with Śikhaṇḍin.

23 O lord of the world!
The Matsyas faced Duryodhana and Śakuni.
Drupada, Cekitana,
and the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki

24 Were locked in combat with Droṇa
and his son Aśvatthāman.
Kṛpa and Kṛtavarman together
attacked Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

25 Spurring their horses, wheeling their chariots,
goading their elephants,
they fought furiously
in all parts of that field.

26 Lightning crackled in the cloudless sky,
clouds of dust blotted the horizon,
mahā-meteors flashed by,
O lord of the world.

27 A mahā-storm seemed to blow,
dust showers fell,
the sun was blotted
by swirls of blinding dust.

28 And the soldiers stood there,
bewildered and lost,
fighting confusedly in that welter
of dusty darkness.

29 Shrill, piercing, deafening noises were emitted
by armour-piercing arrows
fired by the tumultuous hordes
of soldiers.

30 O bull-brave Bharata!
Some star-dazzling weapons,
hurled by glittering arms,
seemed to flood the sky with radiance.

31 O bull-brave Bharata, everywhere one looked
one could see bull's-hide buckles,
with gold filigree-work,
lying scattered.

32 Heads could be seen lopped off and toppling,
and limbs too,
hacked by swords
that glinted in the sunlight.

33 Their horses slaughtered,
chariot wheels, axle, and cupola shattered,
their arms sliced,
many mahā-chariot heroes tumbled dead.

34 And horribly mutilated horses
crumpled on the field,
while chariots careened blindly,
bereft of their heroes.

35 O Bharata! Mangled with arrows, bleeding profusely,
many horses, still in harness,
galloped wildly,
dragging their chariot-yokes.

36 One could see a single huge elephant
trampling and crushing
many heroes deprived of chariots, horses,
and drivers.

37 Smelling the odour of rutting juices
streaming down the temples
of other elephants, some elephants paused;
they were instantly cut down.

38 The whole field was heaped with elephants
carrying magnificent
howdahs and drivers,
all killed with long piked lances.

39 Many elephants with howdahs and drivers
were trapped between two divisions,
and pushed and crushed
by other elephants.

40 Mahārāja, one could see chariot-axles
demolished by elephant trunks
that resembled the huge body
of the Nāga-rājā.

41 Many chariot-heroes,
whose chariot-yokes had been smashed,
were seized by their hair by elephants
and crunched like frail tree-branches.

42 Many massive elephants, dragging chariots
entangled with other chariots,
trumpeted loudly as they lumbered
all over the field.

43 What a spectacle it was!
An unforgettable sight!
Giant elephants dragging chariots
As if uprooting lotuses in a lake.

44 That mahā-battlefield was a wasteland
where cavalry-heroes,
mahā-chariot-heroes and tall flagstaffs
lay scattered.

SECTION SEVENTY-TWO

1 O lord of the world! (continued Sañjaya)
Śikhaṇḍin and Matsya's ruler Virāṭa
together attacked
the invincible mahā-archer Bhīṣma.

2 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna harassed Droṇa
and many other mahā-powerful rājās
of your army
with his sharp and swift artows.

3 The mahā-bowman Sindhu ruler Jayadratha
with his allies and ministers,
and other rulers from the west and the south,
O bull-strong earth-lord,

4 Your furious bow-expert son Duryodhana
and his brother Duḥsaha –
these became targets
of the offensive by Bhīma.

5 Sahadeva chose to fight the two
mahā-chariot-heroes
Śakuni and Ulūka, an invincible bow-expert
father-and-son team.

6 Mahārāja, the mahā-chariot-hero Yudhiṣṭhira,
whom your son deviously deceived,
attacked
the Kaurava elephant division.

7 Pāṇḍu's heroic son by Mādrī, Nakula,
who made his enemies weep,
fought the excellent forces
of the Trigartas.

8 Sātyaki, Cekitāna, and the mahā-chariot-hero
Saubhadra-Abhimanyu,
all brilliant, all invincible,
battled with the Śālvas and Kekayas.

9 Dhṛṣṭaketu, the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca, and Nakula's son,
the bull-brave chariot-hero Śatānīka,
chose to challenge
all your valiant mahā-chariot-heroes.

10 O rājā! The mahā-powerful, super-skilful archer,
infinite-ātmaned general Dhṛṣṭadyumna
combated with Droṇa
renowned for his fierce prowess.

11 And so the brutal battle began.
Your bow-expert soldiers
clashed with the Pāṇḍavas
in merciless mutual slaughter.

12 It was high noon, and the sun
beat down with fierce heat
when the Kaurava-Pāṇḍava killing
commenced.

13 It was enchantment to see
the beautiful pennant-flying chariots,
gold-carved, tiger-skin covered,
speeding through the field.

14 And the noise! The tumult!
The screams of bloodthirsty warriors
bent on slaughter!
Their lion-like roars!

15 We could clearly see the vicious parrying
and lunging
between the Sṛñjayas and Kauravas
in that unbelievable clash.

16 O rājā! Then, suddenly, the sun and the points
of the horizon
were blurred by a cloud-thick volley
of arrows.

17 And *śakti*-missiles with glistening heads
flashed
And keenly tempered swords
flashed
And hurled *tamara*-lances
flashed
Like blue lotuses
in the sunlight

18 And polished armour
flashed
Bracelets and other ornaments
flashed
Dazzling the sky
and the points of the horizon.

19 O rājā! The ornamented corpses
of Indra-like kings
decorated the field
like radiant suns and moons.

20 O rājā! Chariot-heroes, tigers-among-men,
careened on the field –
as colourful as planets
in space.

21 The mahā-powerful super-excelling
chariot-hero Bhīṣma
angrily clashed with Bhīma
in the presence of all the troops.

22 Bhīṣma fired stone-whetted, golden-winged,
oil-smoothed
and energetically-strung arrows at Bhīma,
wounding him seriously.

23 O Bharata! Bhīma was able also to hurl
his mahā-swift *śakti*-missile
which hissed towards Bhīṣma
like a malignant snake.

24 Bhīṣma fired straight arrows
at the gold-bodied *śakti*
whistling towards him,
and pulverised it midway.

25 With a broad-tipped *bhalla*-arrow,
superbly whetted and polished,
Bhīṣma severed Bhīṣma's bow in two,
O Bharata.

26 Mahā-powerful Bhīma flung away his useless bow,
picked up another,
and entered the fray with passionate,
redoubled fury.

27 Charging straight at Bhīṣma,
Sātyaki, his bow-string pulled up to his ear,
fired specially-sharp, swift,
and polished arrows

28 That pierced your father's body, O lord of men.
Then Bhīṣma fitted
a sharp, truly calamitous arrow
to his bow.

29 Bhīṣma took perfect aim
and knocked Sātyaki's charioteer
out of his vehicle. Immediately,
Sātyaki's horses bolted.

30 The panicky horses, wind-swift and thought-swift,
raced through the field,
and shouts of despair were heard
from the troops.

31 Cries of "Hai! Hai!" came from the ranks
of the mahātmā-Pāṇḍavas.
"Run!" "Hold him!" "Go!"
"Steady the steeds!"

32 These were the shouts that followed the trail
of Sātyaki's chariot.
Meanwhile, Bhīṣma, Śāntanu's son,
seizing this opportunity,

33 Pounced upon the Pāṇḍava warriors
like Vṛtra-slaying Indra on the Dānavas.
Harassed by Bhīṣma,
the Somaka-assisted Pāñcālas

34 Steadied their nerves
and together rushed at Bhīṣma.
Kuntī's sons and Dhṛṣṭadyumna attacked
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma,

35 Motivated by one desire only –
the annihilation of your army.
Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others of your army,
O rājā,

36 Were similarly motivated against the Pāṇḍavas.
And so the second phase of the battle began.

SECTION SEVENTY-THREE

1 The mahā-chariot-hero Virāṭa (continued Sañjaya)
wounded in that duel
the maha-chariot-hero Bhīṣma and his horses
with three arrows each.

2 But Śāntanu's son, the mahā-powerful,
dexterous mahā-bowman Bhīṣma
swiftly retaliated with ten sharp
gold-feathered arrows.

3 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
a steady-handed mahā-chariot-hero,
wounded Gāṇḍīva-wielding Arjuna
in the chest with six arrows.

4 Foe-annihilating and adversary-shaming
Phālguna-Arjuna sliced
Aśvatthāman's bow and pinned him down
with five sharp arrows.

5 Wild with anger,
driven almost out of his senses,
unable to bear the slicing of his bow,
Aśvatthāman picked up another bow,

6 O rājā, and shot ninety sharp arrows
at Phālguna-Arjuna,
and with seventy more he afflicted
Vasudeva's son Krishna.

7 Eyes red with anger were Phālguna-Arjuna's;
and Krishna stood firm,
planning his next move,
breathing hot and long sighs.

8 Then Arjuna, that remarkable hero,
gripping his Gāṇḍīva bow
in his left hand,
foe-grinding, roused-to-fury Arjuna

9 Fitted sharp, sleek and venomous arrows
to his bow,
and with those fatal shafts again overpowered
Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman.

10 The arrows pierced the armour
of Droṇa's son
and sipped his blood. But, unworried,
he stood his ground,

11 And returned Arjuna's volley, O rājā,
with a counter-shower.
Firm in battle he stood,
vowed to protect Bhīṣma.

12 His remarkable skill
in harassing and confronting
the twin Krishnas (Arjuna and Krishna himself)
was highly praised.

13 O Bharata! Arjuna was so impressed
by the feat
that he applauded Aśvatthāman
in front of all the warriors.

14 With the special weapons he obtained
from Droṇa,
together with knowledge of their use,
Aśvatthāman fought fearlessly.

15 "He is my ācārya's son,
He is the dear son of Droṇa,
He is a very special Brahmin,
He is worthy of my respect."

16 – These feelings were in the mind
of the foremost chariot-hero,
Bībhatsu-Arjuna, the dreadful-deed-doer;
so he spared Aśvatthāman.

17 Fighting from his white-horsed chariot,
Kaunteya-Arjuna dexterously
and powerfully wrought havoc
among the enemy warriors.

18 Duryodhana cornered Bhīma
the mahā-bowman
with ten stone-sharpened, gold-decorated
vulture-feathered arrows.

19 Incensed, Bhīma brandished
a dazzling fatal-to-foes bow,
and fitted ten exceedingly sharp arrows
to its string.

20 Aiming steadily, and pulling the string
up to his ears,
Bhima released those deadly arrows
at the Kuru rājā.

21 The gem that hung on the chest
of Duryodhana
by golden strings, ringed by arrows
shot by Bhīma,
looked like the dazzling sun
surrounded by planets.

22 Oppressed by Bhīma's arrow-swarm,
your indomitable son
refused to succumb, like a snake reacting
to a man's approach,
or an elephant undeterred by the clapping
of human hands.

23 His anger was boundless;
he struck back at Bhīma
with stone-sharpened, golden-winged,
defence-designed arrows.

24 They looked like two radiant gods,
your sons on the battlefield,
those two mahā-powerful warriors
shooting at and shredding each other.

25 Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu,
humbler of enemy heroes,
attacked Citrasena with ten
and Purumitra with seven arrows.

26 Equal of Śakra-Indra himself,
Abhimanyu danced across the field,
spreading destruction,
shooting seventy arrows at Satyavrata.

27 Not outdone, Citrasena replied with ten,
Satyavrata with nine,
and Purumitra with seven
flesh-shredding arrows.

28 Blood trickling down his body,
Ārjuni-Abhimanyu sliced
the handsome, huge, foe-annihilating bow
of Citrasena.

29 Abhimanyu's arrow, piercing Citrasena's armour,
embedded itself in Citrasena's chest.
The mahā-chariot-hero princes
of your army,

30 In a body, delirious with rage,
shot and wounded Abhimanyu
with sharp arrows – which he skilfully
and sharply reciprocated.

31 Seeing this splendid feat, your sons
hurriedly surrounded Abhimanyu
who was harassing the heroes
of your army

32 With the ferocity of a summer fire
reducing dry grass to ashes.
Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu looked
amazingly handsome.

33 O lord of the world!
Roused by Abhimanyu's performance,
your grandson Lakṣmaṇa confronted him
for a duel.

34 Undaunted, Abhimanyu shot six sleek
sharp arrows
at the auspicious-marked body of Lakṣmaṇa
and on his charioteer.

35 Mahārāja, Lakṣmaṇa replied with arrows
that struck Subhadrā's son
with a skill that impressed everyone
as truly incredible.

36 But Subhadrā's mahā-powerful son recovered,
and retaliated
by killing Lakṣmaṇa's four horses
and wounding him too.

37 Standing in his collapsed chariot
with its four horses slain,
foe-annihilating Lakṣmaṇa flung a spear
at Abhimanyu's chariot.

38 But Abhimanyu, with well-aimed arrows,
splintered the snake-like spear
that sped fearfully and inexorably
towards him.

39 It was then the Kṛpa's chariot flashed
across the field
and sped off with Lakṣmaṇa
in the presence of all the soldiers.

40 In that confused and indiscriminate battle,
soldiers began grappling
with each other in a mahā-fearful scrimmage
of mutual barbarity.

41 The mahā-archers of your army
and the mahā-chariot-heroes
of the Pāṇḍavas were locked in deadly,
insensate killing.

42 The Sṛñjaya warriors, their hair dishevelled,
armours dented,
ears ripped off, bows smashed,
fought with their bare hands.

43 Mahā-powerful mahā-muscled Bhīṣma,
livid with anger,
with massive strength and divine weapons
fought the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas.

44 It was an awesome carnage –
the field was cluttered
with the corpses of elephants, horses,
chariot heroes and others.

SECTION SEVENTY-FOUR

1 O rājā (continued Sañjaya),
mahā-muscled unbeaten Sātyaki
picked up a magnificent bow and,
pulling it taut,

2 Fired many winged and venomous arrows
on the battlefield –
revealing an enviable dexterity
and ease of marksmanship,

3 Which he had learnt in the past
from his friend Arjuna.
The speed with which he pulled his bow,
drew his arrows,
strung them, and fired them
in swift succession

4 On the battlefield, fitting fresh arrows
again and again –
he looked like a cloud streaming rain –
a spectacular phenomenon!

5 Rājā Duryodhana saw him swelling in grandeur,
O Bharata,
and ordered ten thousand chariots
to attack him.

6 Sātyaki, truly brave and strong,
a mahā-archer,
employed the resources of divine weapons
to repulse them.

7 After accomplishing that remarkable feat,
Sātyaki brandished his bow
and approached Bhūriśravas
for a duel.

8 Bhūriśravas was alarmed by the fact
that Sātyaki
had repulsed his chariot-heroes,
and so he prepared himself.

9 Pulling taut his massive bow
that resembled Indra's rainbow,
and fitting it with snake-arrows
that impacted like thunderbolts –

10 Thousands of such arrows –
he skilfully, mahārāja, shot them.
The mere graze of these arrows was fatal.
Sātyaki's followers,

11 O rājā, unable to bear the onslaught
of the invincible hero,
abandoned their posts, and fled helter-skelter
in fear, O rājā.

12 Seeing them scatter, the ten maha-powerful
mahā-chariot-hero sons of Sātyaki,
in magnificent armour, magnificently-armed,
magnificently-flagged,

13 Charged in a body at the mahā-archer
Bhūriśravas
whose flag-emblem was a sacrificial pole.
They shouted wrathfully:

14 "*Bho*! *Bho*! Kinsman of the Kauravas!
Come! Come, O mahā-powerful one!
Fight us one by one, or together –
as you please.

15 It is possible you may defeat us –
and gain glory.
Or we'll defeat you –
and so delight our noble father."

16 Finest-of-men Bhūriśravas,
mahā-powerful and proud and brave,
saw them ready to attack,
and replied to Sātyaki's sons:

17 "Well spoken, heroes!
If fight you must, I'll fight you all.
Fight with all the strength you have!
I'll kill you all."

18 The mahā-heroes of the bow heard
foe-crushing Bhūriśravas' challenge,
and swiftly released a rain-like shower
of arrows.

19 Mahārāja, a tumultuous battle raged
on the field
that afternoon between Bhūriśravas
and the ten sons.

20 O king! It was unbelievable
the way they released arrows,
like torrential showers
on Mount Meru itself.

21 But that lone chariot-hero Bhūriśravas
repulsed all arrows –
arrows like Yama's rod or like thunderbolts –
in mid-flight.

22 We witnessed an astounding spectacle!
Singlehanded,
Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas fearlessly defied
the united attack.

23 O rājā! The ten mahā-chariot-heroes
made every effort
to surround their brave enemy
and exterminate him.

24 But the māhā-chariot-hero Bhūriśravas,
O Bharata rājā,
with livid anger succeeded in splintering
their large bows.

25 After smashing their bows, O bull-brave Bharata,
Bhūriśravas pressed his advantage
and, firing multiple arrows with sure aim,
he decapitated them.

26 They fell on the ground
like trees felled by lightning.
Seeing his mahā-powerful sons lying dead
on the field, O rājā,

27 Sātyaki roared out his war-cry
and attacked Bhūriśravas.
O rājā! The two mahā-chariot-heroes clashed
in dreadful combat.

28 They destroyed each other's chariots
and killed the horses.
Chariotless, the mahā-chariot-heroes leapt wildly
at each other,

29 Brandishing flashing swords and dazzling shields.
It was a duel
between two tigers-among-men –
a glorious encounter.

30 Their swords clashed,
blood flowed from their bodies;
blood dripped from their wounds,
trickling on the ground.

31 The bodies of the mahā-valiant heroes
gleamed with blood
like *kiṁśuka* flames-of-the-forest
in full bloom.

32 Rushing alongside the excellent sword-wielder
Sātyaki, O rājā,
Bhīma hurriedly swung him up
inside his chariot.

33 Your son Duryodhana too, O rājā,
raced his chariot
alongside Bhūriśravas and drove away with him
in front of all the archers.

34 The furious Pāṇḍavas then decided to target
the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma,
and they launched, O bull-brave Bharata,
a fierce attack on him.

35 The sun was setting,
the western sky was a bright red;
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna in a fury slew
twenty five thousand mahā-chariot-heroes

36 Who had been orderedby Duryodhana
to kill Pārtha-Arjuna.
They perished like insects entering
a giant fire.

37 It was at this time that the Matsyas
and the Kekayas, skilled archers all,
surrounded mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna
and his son Abhimanyu.

38 The sun was slowly sinking beneath
the western horizon,
and confusion seemed to have gripped
the battling warriors.

39 Mahārāja, Bhīṣma then decided to withdraw
his troops
from the field because his horses were tired
(Sañjaya continued).

40 The Pāṇḍava and Kaurava armies also
were exhausted
after their day of battle.
Retiring to their camps,

41 They rested. So did the Sṛñjayas,
O Bharata,
along with the hosts of the Pāṇḍavas
and the Kauravas.

SECTION SEVENTY-FIVE

1 O rājā (said Sañjaya), night passed,
the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas rested,
and marched
into another day of battle.

2 There was a mahā-deafening noise, O Bharata,
as the warriors prepared,
with chariots getting readied,
elephants being caparisoned,

3 Soldiers donning their armour, O Bharata,
and horses being harnessed.
On all sides rose the roll of *dundubhi*-drums
and the blare of conches.

4 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira said to Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
"O mahā-muscled one,
assemble your ranks in the *makara*-formation
to rout the enemy."

5 Mahārāja! The mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
acting on Pārtha-Yudhiṣṭhira's orders,
immediately arrayed his splendid chariots
in the strategic formation.

6 Mahārāja, the formation's head comprised
king Drupada and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna;
the mahā-chariot-heroes Sahadeva and Nakula
were its two eyes;

7 Mahā-powerful Bhīma its mouth.
Mahāraja!
Saubhadri-Abhimanyu, the sons of Draupadī,
and the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,

8 Sātyaki, and Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
formed the neck of the array;
Virāṭa, with a huge force,
was its back, mahārāja.

9 The five Kekaya brothers and Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
assisted by a massive striking force,
stationed themselves
on its left flank;

10 Dhṛṣṭaketu, that tiger-among-men,
and Cekitāna readied themselves for battle
as upholders of the strength
of the right flank.

11 Mahārāja, the brilliant warrior Kuntibhoja
and Śatānīka,
both mahā-chariot-heroes,
formed the feet of the war-array.

12 The tremendous bowman Śikhaṇḍin,
together with the Somakas,
supported by valiant Irāvat,
became the tail of the formation.

13 Structuring their army in this fashion,
O Bharata mahārāja,
the battle-eager Pāṇḍavas put on armour
and, at sunrise,

14 Marched towards the Kaurava camp
with elephant-warriors,
chariot-soldiers, foot-soldiers, cavalry,
flags waving, weapons shining.

15 O rājā! Observing the Pāṇḍava battle-tactic,
your *pitā* Devavrata-Bhīṣma
deployed his forces in the shape
of a *krauñca*-bird.

16 Its beak was illustrious Droṇa,
the son of Bharadvāja;
and Aśvatthāman and Kṛpa, O lord of men,
were its two eyes.

17 Finest-of-bowmen Kṛtavarman,
with the soldiers
from Kāmboja and Bāhlīka
became the head of the crane.

18 Mahārāja,
Śūrasena and your son Duryodhana,
surrounded by many rājās,
formed the neck of the array.

19 Bhagadatta the king of Prāgjyotiṣa,
with the combined forces
of the Madras, Sauvīras and Kekayas,
formed the breast.

20 Suśarma, the ruler of Prasthala,
dressed in armour,
led a massive force with orders
to protect the left flank.

21 The Tuṣāras, Yavanas, Śakas,
and the soldiers of the land of Cucupa
had orders to guard
the right flank.

22 O bestower of honours! Śrutāyu, Śatāyu
and the son of Somadatta, Bhūriśravas,
represented the force that protected
the rear part.

23 The Pāṇḍavas marched to attack
at crack of dawn.
Mahārāja, it was a mahā-gruesome battle
that we witnessed.

24 Elephants clashed with chariot-heroes,
chariot-heroes with elephants,
cavalry against cavalry,
chariot against horse;

25 Horse against horse and elephant
in grisly encounter, O rājā;
and elephant against elephant
as well as cavalry.

26 Chariot-heroes fought with foot-soldiers,
cavalry with infantry.
O rājā! Fiercely they grappled
in frenzied confusion.

27 The army of the Pāṇḍavas, led by Bhīma,
Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, and others,
scintillated like a starry sky
on a pitch-black night.

28 Your army too, led by Bhīṣma, Kṛpa,
Droṇa, Śālya, Duryodhana and others,
gleamed like planets
swimming in space.

29 Kuntī's son Bhīma, the accomplished warrior,
saw Droṇa,
and instantly charged on swift horses
against Bharadvāja's son.

30 Droṇa, equally valiant,
energised with mounting wrath,
shot nine arrows at Bhīma,
piercing his vulnerable body-parts.

31 Thogh badly wounded,
Bhīma wasted no time
in despatching Droṇa's charioteer
to the realm of Yama.

32 Bharadvāja's son Droṇa,
driving the chariot all by himself,
swept through the Pāṇḍava ranks
like fire through cotton.

33 Decimated by the attacks of Bhīṣma
and Droṇa,
the excellent Kekaya and Sṛñjaya warriors
fled.

34 Your soldiers too, mauled and mangled
by Arjuna and Bhīma,
stood senseless, like a lovely-limbed
weak-willed girl.

35 Many heroes perished in that fierce battle.
O Bharata, your soldiers and the Pāṇḍavas
were mutilated;
gloom overcast the two armies.

36 But it was an inspiring sight, O Bharata,
to see your soldiers
fighting their enemy
with such singleness of purpose.

37 The mahā-powerful Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas,
O lord of the world,
battled with a wide variety of weapons
and counter-weapons.

SECTION SEVENTY-SIX

1 Our army is excellent and efficient, Sañjaya
(said Dhṛtarāṣṭra).
It abides by every military principle.
It cannot lose.

2 Its soldiers are disciplined,
totally loyal and devoted,
free from drunkenness and licence,
and fully experienced.

3 They are neither very old
nor very young,
neither lean nor fat,
but active, strong, and healthy.

4 All wear armour, all possess varied weapons
of attack;
they are trained to fight with swords, maces,
and bare arms.

5 They are expert in the handling
of spears and swords,
iron clubs, short shafts, javelins,
as well as mallets,

6 *Kampana*-weapons, bows,
and *kaṇapa* iron lances,
kṣepaṇi sting-missiles of all kinds,
and also hand-to-hand combat.

7 They are trained in every physical exercise,
they are skilled
in climbing and dismounting from elephants,
in attack and retreat,

8 In exploiting advantage
and also in taking cover;
they know the art of managing horses, chariots,
and elephants.

9 Each has been thoroughly tested
on the battlefield;
each is paid according to the prowess
he has displayed.

10 None has been enlisted
for reasons of friendship,
or by gift-giving, or nepotism,
or any similar malpractice.

11 The soldiers who make our army
come from good families;
they are intelligent; we honour their lineage
and treat them well.

12 *Tāta*! Dear one! Our leaders are time-tested
men of character,
as dependable as the guardians of the world,
the Lokapālas.

13 And they are assisted by volunteer Kṣatriyas
of world-wide fame
who have chosen to place their valour
at our disposal.

14 No wonder our army overflows
like an ocean
swollen with the waters of streams
feeding it from all sides.
Our chariots are like wingless birds,
our elephants its billows;

15 Our countless soldiers are its waters,
our vehicles its waves,
and maces, spears, arrows and lances
is teeming creatures;

16 Everywhere flags and pennants and ornaments
and galloping horses
that strike the ocean-billows like winds
whipping it to fury! –

17 An army that's like a roaring, shoreless,
endless mahā-ocean!
An army protected by Droṇa and Bhīṣma
and Kṛtavarman,

18 By Kṛpa, by Duḥśāsana
and by Jayadratha,
by Bhagadatta, Vikarṇa, Aśvatthāman
and the Bāhlīkas,

19 By all the finest and bravest heroes
and mahātmās!
If this army gets wiped out,
whose fault is it but fate's?

20 Sañjaya, never have the eyes of mortals
witnessed such a giant army,
nor have the mahā-fortune-favoured ṛṣis
of the past.

21 So, if an army of such colossal size,
bristling with every weapon,
is routed in battle,
what else is it but destiny?

22 Sañjaya, I must confess I am amazed
that an army of such size and strength
has not been able
to crush the Pāṇḍavas.

23 It must be that the gods have come personally
to help the Pāṇḍavas against us,
or why are we getting baffled
every single day?

24 Vidura always gave my son
wise and useful advice,
but ill-minded Duryodhana refused
to listen to him.

25 I know that mahātmā Vidura has deep insight
into the future.
What's happening now, *tāta*, dear one,
he knew it all in advance.

26 Perhaps, Sañjaya, this is the way
it had to happen.
What's ordained by the Creator will happen –
that is all.

SECTION SEVENTY-SEVEN

1 O bull-brave Bharata rājā, it is your own fault
(said Sañjaya)
that has led to this calamity.
Duryodhana failed to see

2 The consequences of violation of dharma,
O lord of the world –
though you did. Yet you allowed the dice-game
to take place!

3 It is your own fault that has led
to this war with the Pāṇḍavas.
You are today reaping the fruits
of your own misdeeds.

4 You do the karma, you taste the fruit,
O rājā;
in this life, and later –
you reap exactly what you sow.

5 But be calm, be patient, O rājā,
though mahā-peril has struck.
O lord of men! Listen to my account
of the day's battle.

6 Slicing through the ranks of your mahā-army
with sharp arrows,
valiant Bhīma launched an attack
on Duryodhana's brothers.

7 Duḥśāsana, Durviṣaha, Duḥṣaha, Durmada, Jaya,
Jayatsena, Vikarṇa, Citrasena, Sudarśana,

8 Cārucitra, Suvarman, Duṣkarṇa and Karṇa –
These and many other mahā-chariot-heroes,

9 Who were near Bhīṣma,
and your infuriated mahā-chariot-hero sons,
were tricked by Bhīma
who succeeded in penetrating their ranks.

10 Those lords of men spotted him in their midst
and resolved:
"Now is the time to trap him
and make short work of him."

11 Kuntī's son Bhīma, ringed by cousin-brothers.
all resolved to kill him,
looked like the sun ringed by malignant mahā-planets
at the dissolution of the universe.

12 Stationed right in the centre of the Kauravas,
he did not fear,
as Mahendra-Indra did not fear
in the centre of the Dānava antigods.

13 *Prabhu!* Lord! Hundreds and thousands
of chariot-heroes rained missiles
on that sole hero who stood for battle
in their midst.

14 Valiant Bhīma ignored the assault
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons,
and killed chariot-heroes, elephant-riders,
cavalry and others.

15 Realising that his cousin-brothers were bent
on capturing him,
mahā-minded Bhīma decided, O rājā,
to kill them all.

16 Leaping from his chariot, Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma,
mace uplifted,
plunged into the mahā-oceanic swarm
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons.

17 His mace smashed the pillar-strong elephants,
reducing to pulp their huge bodies;
mangled, they lay,
inert on the ground,

18 Riderless, like rows of toppled hills.
He sliced through the ranks,
destroying hundreds of chariots
along with their riders.

19 Horses, horse-riders, soldiers fell victim
to his fury.
We witnessed some of the war's finest exploits
then,

20 O rājā, as Bhīma danced through the field
with his mace,
like rod-welding Antaka-Yama
at the close of Cosmic Time Kāla.

21 While Bhīma was decimating his foes,
Drupada's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
bypassing Droṇa,
rushed to fight Śakuni.

22 The bull-brave hero stemmed the advance
of the army of your sons,
and noticed Bhīma's chariot
isolated on the field.

23 Mahārāja! Seeing Bhīma's charioteer Viśoka there,
without his master,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna was so depressed
that he felt dizzy.

24 He sighed deeply, tears overpowered him;
he asked Viśoka:
"What has happened to Bhīma,
who is dearer to me than life?"

25 Viśoka did *añjali* before Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and replied:
"Tiger-among-men Bhīma,
the valiant son of Pāṇḍu,

26 Left me here and plunged in the mahā-ocean
of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
cheerfully
instructing me:

27 'Wait for me, charioteer, briefly here
with the horses
while I go and finish off those
who would destroy me.

28 Seeing mahā-powerful Bhīma rushing at his enemies,
mace uplifted,
the other charioteers were transported
to fits of trembling joy.

29 This was how wolf-waisted Bhīma, O rājā,
sliced athrough the ring
of his enemies
in the fearful thick of the battle'."

30 Hearing the explanation of Viśoka,
mahā-powerful
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
said to him on the field of battle:

31 "Charioteer, would life mean anything to me
if I forget
my affection for the Pāṇḍavas
and return without Bhīma?

32 What will the Kṣatriyas think of me
if I return without him?
Where was I
when he ventured out alone?

33 All the gods, headed by Śakra-Indra himself,
hold despicable
the soldier who abandons his comrades,
and returns unscathed.

34 Mahā-powerful Bhīma is not only my relative
but my *sakhā*, my loved-and-loving friend:
foe-crushing Bhīma is my devoted *bhakta*,
as I am his.

35 I must go where wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
has ventured.
Watch me kill my enemies
as Vāsava-Indra killed the Dānavas!"

36 Following the attack route of Bhīma,
with elephants
lying crushed on either side,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna advanced fearlessly.

37 Dhṛṣṭadyumna saw Bhīma harassing
the enemy soldiers
and battering his adversaries
as if they were trees.

38 A mahā uproar rose
from the harassed and terrorised ranks
of chariot-heroes, horse-soldiers, foot-soldiers,
and elephant-riders

39 O honour-bestowing monarch,
the only sounds that came from the lips
of your soldiers, traumatised by Bhīma,
were "Hai! Hai!"

40 The Kauravas then manoeuvred
to surround Bhīma
with a fearful assault
of multi-pronged weaponry.

41 Astute Dhṛṣṭadyumna
saw Bhīma, heroic
descendant of Pāṇḍu,
oppressed on all sides
by the powerful ranks
of the Kaurava forces,

42 And approaching his mace-
wielding friend, who was bleeding
yet spewing anger
like Antaka-Yama
on the day of dissolution,
he comforted Bhīma.

43 Mahātmā Dhṛṣṭadyumna
removed all the arrows
from the body of Bhīma,
and embracing him,
took him inside his chariot,
while the Kauravas watched.

44 Your son Duryodhana,
approaching his brothers,
advised them as follows:
"Dhṛṣṭadyumna is a man
of adharma, and now
he has sided with Bhīma.

45 Before he can issue
a challenge to us,
we'll march and destroy him."
Thus ordered, the sons
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, eager
to wipe out their foes,

46 With weapons uplifted,
like comets that fall
at the end of a yuga, –
they attacked Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
With bow-twang and chariot-din,
the Kauravas

47 Rained torrents of arrows,
like storm-clouds on hills,
on Drupada's son
who, skilled in the art
of weapon-deflection,
though wounded, stood firm.

48 The mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, in fact,
relied upon the weapon
pramohana's power
to render futile
the attack of your sons.

49 As Indra battling Daityas,
O rājā, he fought
with a fury unbounded.
The *pramohana* weapon
deluded your sons
and deprived them of sense.

50 Observing your sons
aswoon on the field
like dying men,
the Kauravas fled
with their horses and elephants
and chariots and weapons.

51 In the meantime, the incomparable weapons-expert
Droṇa
pinned down Drupada
with three fierce arrows.

52 O rājā! Wounded by Droṇa,
Drupada fled the field,
remembering his previous bitterness
with Droṇa.

53 Valiant Droṇa sounded his victory conch
as Drupada fled.
The blare of the conch sent fear shuddering
through the Somakas.

54 Powerful Droṇa, brilliant arms-wielder,
received news
that your sons had been petrified
by the *pramohana*,

55 And intent on rescuing them, mahārāja,
he left hurriedly.
The mahā-bowman son of Bharadvāja,
Droṇa saw

56 Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Bhīma
weaving across the field,
and your sons helpless
as if deprived of their senses.

57 He fitted the sense-reviving weapon
called *prajñāstra,*
to his bow and neutralised the *pramohana.*
Your mahā-chariot-hero sons recovered.

58 Eager to do battle, they faced Bhīma
and Dhṛṣṭadyumna again.
Yudhiṣṭhira summoned his soldiers
and said:

59 "Deploy twelve brave chariot-heroes.
Let Abhimanyu lead.
Let them wear armour,
and follow the trail of Bhīma.

60 My mind is anxious about Bhīma
and Dhṛṣṭadyumna."
On Yudhiṣṭhira's orders, the special soldiers
armed themselves

61 Saying, "It will be done,"
and in mid-afternoon
the crack force proceeded
on its mission.

62 Led by Abhimanyu,
the five Kekaya princes,
the five sons of Draupadī,
and the illustrious hero Dhṛṣṭaketu

63 In a strike strategy
known as the foe-exterminating Sucīmukha,
marched in needle-point formation
against your sons.

64 Mahā-bowman Abhimanyu's attack
was not in the power of your sons to repulse.
Bhīma and Dhṛṣṭadyumna's attacks
had weakened them –

65 So that when the expert warriors of Abhimanyu
rushed at them, O lord of men,
you army stood as vulnerable
as a tipsy girl on a highway.

66 Abhimanyu pierced through the ranks
of his enemies,
his golden flag fluttering, to rescue Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and Vṛkodara-Bhīma.

67 And those two mahā-brilliant bowmen,
on the battlefield,
encouraged by Abhimanyu,
started harassing your soldiers afresh.

68 The Pāñcāla prince, Drupada's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
seeing his learned-in-all-knowledge guru Droṇa
advancing, stopped attacking your sons,
O Bharata descendant.

69 Securing Vṛkodara-Bhīma
in the chariot of the Kekaya prince,
angry Dhṛṣṭadyumna focused his attack
on weapons-expert Droṇa.

70 Bharadvāja's son, foe-crushing Droṇa
sliced the bow of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
fiercely and swiftly
with a single arrow.

71 Keeping in mind the bread he had eaten
in the house of Duryodhana,
grateful Droṇa shot a hundred more arrows
at Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

72 Crusher-of-enemies Dhṛṣṭadyumna
picked up another bow
and wounded Droṇa
with twenty golden stone-sharpened arrows.

73 Droṇa retaliated by shattering the bow
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
and with four splendid arrows despatching
his four horses

74 To the abode of death of Vaivasvata-Yama;
he also succeeded, O Bharata,
in killing Dhṛṣṭadyumna's charioteer
with a broad-headed *bhalla*-arrow.

75 Strong-armed mahā-chariot-hero
brave Dhṛṣṭadyumna leapt
from his horseless chariot
and jumped into Abhimanyu's chariot.

76 The huge Pāṇḍava army of chariots,
horses and elephants
seemed to shudder in front of the eyes of Bhīma
and Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

77 They saw their battle-formation dispersed
by brave Droṇa,
and all the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes
stood helpless.

78 Overwhelmed by the piercing-sharp arrows
of Droṇa,
the Pāṇḍava army thrashed about
like a stormy ocean.

79 Seeing their enemy on the brink
of total panic,
O Bharata, your soldiers rejoiced;
seeing the brave ācārya
scattering his forces, they exclaimed,
"*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*! Well done!"

SECTION SEVENTY-EIGHT

1 Rājā Duryodhana, recovering his senses
(continued Sañjaya).
returned to battle by raining arrows
on unflinching Bhīma.

2 Your sons, all mahā-chariot-heroes,
again unitedly faced Bhīma,
opposing him
with brilliant bravery.

3 Mahā-muscled Bhīma climbed into his chariot
and drove it
straight to the spot where your sons
had gathered.

4 Lifting his gigantic, foe-annihilating
colourfully-decorated formidable bow,
Bhīma fired arrow after arrow
at your son.

5 Rājā Duryodhana succeeded in shooting
a *nārāca*-arrow
straight at a vulnerable part of the body
of mahā-powerful Bhīma.

6 Wounded by the ingenuity of your son,
the mahā-bowman Bhīma
glowered with red eyes and,
pulling taut his bow-string,

7 He released three arrows –
one at the chest of rājā Duryodhana,
two at his arms – but Duryodhana stood firm,
like a rājā-hill.

8 Seeing the two enraged heroes
locked in combat,
Duryodhana's younger brothers,
ready to die in battle,

9 Remembered their earlier resolve
to incapacitate Bhīma,
and poured all their energies
in a furious attack.

10 But, mahārāja, mahā-powerful Bhīma,
seeing them advancing,
rushed at them like one elephant
attacking a host of others.

11 Mahārāja! Delirious with rage,
mahā-illustrious energetic Bhīma
fired his first arrow – a *nārāca* shaft –
at your son Citrasena.

12 After which, O Bharata, he kept up
an incessant barrage
of gold-winged, swift arrows
at your other sons.

13 By then, the twelve mahā-chariot-heroes
under the leadership of Abhimanyu
had re-grouped themselves
for another attack,

14 And, as ordered by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
on a special mission,
they found themselves face-to-face, mahārāja,
with your mahā-powerful sons.

15 Seeing all those warriors in their chariots,
glowing like fire or like the sun,
seeing those mahā-archers
of exquisite resplendence,

16 Wearing golden crowns that shone dazzlingly
in the sunlight,
your mahā-powerful sons gave up their plan
of humbling Bhīma.

17 But Kuntī's son Bhīma
would not accept the thought
that they would leave the field alive –
he continued shooting arrows.

18 Seeing Abhimanyu united with Bhīma
and Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
all the mahā-chariot-heroes
of your army,

19 Including Duryodhana,
lifted their massive bows
and raced to the spot
where the Pāṇḍavas were stationed.

20 O Bharata! Mahārāja, that afternoon
one of the fiercest encounters of the war
took place between your soldiers
and the Pāṇḍava ranks.

21 Abhimanyu killed the horses of Vikarṇa
in that mahā-battle,
and wounded Vikarṇa seriously
with twenty five arrows.

22 Vikarṇa abandoned his horseless chariot,
O Bharata rājā,
and took refuge in the chariot
of Citrasena.

23 Abhimanyu saw the two brothers
standing in the chariot, O Bharata,
and fired a thick net of arrows
at both enhancers-of-family-glory.

24 Citrasena and Vikarṇa wounded Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu
with five steel arrows,
but Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu remained as firm
as Mount Meru.

25 O honour-bestowing Indra-among-rājās!
Duḥśāsana clashed
with the five princes of Kekaya
in a wonderful encounter.

26 O lord of the world! Furious with anger,
the five sons of Draupadī
blocked your son Duryodhana
with fierce, snake-venomed arrows.

27 Your son replied with equal ferocity, O rājā,
wounding each son of Draupadī
separately
with sharp and deadly arrows.

28 Blood drenched the body of your son:
he looked like a hill
washed with streams slipping down
red-chalk grooves.

29 O rājā! Mighty Bhīṣma punished
the army of the Pāṇḍavas
as a herdsman punishes
a crowd of stray cattle.

30 The tremendous twang of Arjuna's Gāṇḍīva,
O lord of the world,
reverberated as he battered the right flank
of your army.

31 In that terrifying battle, O Bharata,
one saw headless trunks
of Pāṇḍava and Kaurava soldiers
littering the field.

32 An ocean!
An ocean of tiger-brave soldiers!
Flowing blood its waters!
Arrows its waves!
Elephants its islands!
Horses its fish!
Chariots its boats!

33 Splendid men!
Hundreds dead on the field!
Hundreds of thousands!
Arms severed,
Armour crumpled,
Bodies pulped.

34 Musth elephants slain!
Carcases splashed with blood!
The battlefield like a plain
Dotted with elephant-hillocks!
O excellent Bharata! An awesome sight!

35 Such was the amazing spectacle
that we witnessed, O Bharata,
with every Pāṇḍava and every Kaurava
eager to fight.

36 This was how the battle took place
between your heroes and the Pāṇḍavas,
both seeking victory
and mahā-glory.

SECTION SEVENTY-NINE

1 The sun was turning a bright crimson
(continued Sañjaya).
when battle-eager rājā Duryodhana rushed at Bhīma
determined to kill him.

2 Seeing his valiant bitter enemy advancing swiftly
towards him,
Bhīma became livid with rage,
and shouted:

3 "I have waited many years,
and now the time has come!
If you do not run away today,
I will kill you.

4 I will kill you, and so soothe the pain
of Kuntī,
and avenge Draupadī's insult
and the shame of our exile.

5 Son of Gāndhārī, in your pride
you harmed the sons of Pāṇḍu.
Open you eyes and see! –
and taste the fruit of your misdeeds!

6 You listened only to the advice
of Karṇa and Saubala-Śakuni,
you ignored the claims of the Pāṇḍavas,
you treated them cruelly.

7 You mocked the descendant of the Dāśārhas,
Krishna himself,
when he came on his peace mission.
It pleased you
to send Ulūka to us
with your heartless proposal:

8 'Kill us, and take your share.' Good!
I'll kill you and your kinsmen,
and avenge
all your heinous misdeeds."

9 Saying this, Bhīma stretched his bow taut,
and fitted dread arrows
that had the blinding glare
of mahā-thunderbolts.

10 Enraged, he fired twentysix arrows
at Suyodhana-Duryodhana,
resembling virulent flames
and speeding unerringly ahead.

11 He splintered Duryodhana's bow
with two arrows,
wounded his charioteer with another two,
with four more
he sent the chariot's horses
to the abode of Yama.

12 Then, foe-crushing Bhīma, with two arrows
pulled fully taunt,
O finest of men, shredded the umbrella
of Duryodhana's chariot.

13 Three more arrows ripped apart
the radiant flag.
Having achieved this,
Bhīma emitted his fierce war-cry.

14 The dazzling flag, studded with gems,
collapsed suddenly
on the ground, like a lightning flash
flopping on earth.

15 The rulers of the earth saw the sun-bright standard
of the Kaurava lord,
studded with gems and elephant-emblemed,
fall in tatters.

16 Smiling casually, mahā-chariot-hero Bhīma
wounded Duryodhana with ten arrows,
like an elephant-rider goading his mahā-beast
with a hook on the battlefield.

17 Jayadratha, rajā of the Sindhus
and finest of mahā-chariot-heroes,
supported by crack soldiers,
positioned himself on Duryodhana's flank.

18 O rājā! The excellent chariot-hero Kṛpa
drove his chariot alongside,
and picked up the unfuriated Duryodhana
to safety inside it.

19 Duryodhana, weak from the wounds inflicted
by the arrows of Bhīma,
crouched low inside the chariot of Kṛpa,
O rājā.

20 In the meantime, Jayadratha,
bent on killing Bhīma,
ringed him with a host of chariots
and soldiers.

21 O rājā! Dhṛṣṭaketu and valiant Abhimanyu,
the Kekayas,
and Draupadī's sons
started attacking your sons.

22 Citrasena, Sucitra, Citrāṅgada, Citradarśana,
Cārucitra, Sucāru, and Nanda and Upananda –

23 These eight illustrious princes, O rājā,
all mahā-bowmen,
swiftly manoeuvred to surround
Abhimanyu's chariot.

24 Mahā-minded Abhimanyu selected
five curved and knotted arrows
for each of them, and pinned them down
with unerring aim.

25 Each of those arrows,
shot from his radiant bow,
had the impact of a thunderbolt,
each was like death itself.
The eight attacked Saubhadra-Abhimanyu,
that unexcelled chariot-hero,

26 With counter-arrows that fell like a cloud-burst
on Mount Meru.
Abhimanyu was well-versed in war-skills
and weaponry.

27 Abhimanyu retorted with an attack, mahārāja,
that made all of them tremble,
like thunder-wielding Indra terrorising mahā-antigods
in the god-antigod war.

28 The excellent chariot-hero Abhimanyu,
O Bharata,
next fired fourteen snake-venomed *bhalla* arrows
at Vikarṇa.

29 He seemed to dance on the battlefield
as his arrows
sliced Vikarṇa's flag and killed Vikarṇa's horses
and charioteer.

30 Mahā-powerful Abhimanyu,
flaming with anger,
continued firing sharp and deadly arrows
at Vikarṇa.

31 These arrows, bright with *kaṅka*-feathers,
whizzed through Vikarṇa's body
and fell on the ground
like hissing snakes.

32 Feather-decked, with wings and tips
worked in gold,
bathed in Vikarṇa's blood,
they appeared to vomit blood.

33 Seeing Vikarṇa multilated by the arrows,
his cousin-brothers rushed
to stem the advance of Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
and his followers.

34 Riding their chariots, these formidable warriors
clashed head-on
with the Pāṇḍava ranks
in a bitter and gory fight.

35 Durmukha wounded Śrutakarman
with seven swift arrows,
shredded his flag, and with seven more
killed his charioteer.

36 Firing six arrows at close range,
Durmukha felled
Śrutakarman's gold-caparisoned, wind-swift horses
and killed his charioteer.

37 Standing on the remains of his smashed chariot,
mahā-chariot-hero Śrutakarman,
in livid anger, hurled a flaming, meteor-like
śakti javelin.

38 The self-glowing javelin sped right through
Durmukha's armour,
and ripped it apart before embedding itself
in the ground.

39 Mahā-chariot-hero Sutasoma saw Śrutakarman
chariotless, and skilfully
manoeuvred his chariot alongside,
and rescued his brother.

40 O rājā! Next it was heroic Śrutakīrti
who advanced
against your son Jayatsena,
determined to kill him.

41 Your son Jayatsena sliced the bow
of the noble hero Śrutakīrti,
the bow the mahā-twang of whose stretch
filled the field –

42 Using a horse-shoe-headed arrow,
and smiling to himself.
Seeing his brother's bow shattered,
Śatānīka, O Bharata,

43 Roaring like a lion,
rushed to the spot.
Stretching his bow
as far as it would go,

44 He effortlessly wounded Jayatsena
with ten sharp arrows,
and celebrated by trumpeting
like a musth elephant.

45 With an incredibly sharp arrow
capable of piercing any armour,
Śatānīka gashed the chest
of Jayatsena.

46 The humiliation of his brother stirred
brave Duṣkarna to action.
He splintered the bow and arrows
of Nākula-Śatānīka.

47 Wielding another magnificent flexible bow,
mahā-powerful Śatānīka
nocked it and fitted to it
arrows of fatal power.

48 He shouted at Duṣkarṇa
in front of Duṣkarna's brothers, "Wait!"
and shot those snake-arrows
straight at him.

49 With one arrow he smashed Duṣkarṇa's bow,
with two
he wounded the charioteer,
with seven he wounded Duṣkarṇa.

50 With twelve exceedingly sharp arrows
he killed
the gold-caparisoned, thought-swift horses
of Duṣkarṇa.

51 Incontrollably infuriated,
he smashed Duṣkarṇa in the chest
with a broad-headed straight coursing
bhalla-arrow.

52 Duṣkarṇa toppled like a huge tree
hit by lightning.
Seeing Duṣkarṇa killed, O rājā,
the five mahā-chariot-heroes

53 Surrounded Śatānika with the sole aim
of killing him.
They hemmed him inside a massive shower
of arrows;

54 Upon which, the five Kekaya princes attacked
the five mahā-chariot-heroes.
Seeing them advance relentlessly,
your sons,

55 Mahārāja, met them head-on,
like mahā-elephants clashing with elephants.
Durmukha and Durjaya,
Yuva and Durmarśana,

56 Śatruñjaya, Śatrusaha – these illustrious heroes,
Mahārāja, advanced against the Kekaya brothers.

57 They drove chariots
that looked like massive forts,
their horses were dazzlingly caparisoned
in different colours,

58 They brandished magnificent bows,
wore splendid armour,
flew brilliant pennants, marching like lions do,
striding from forest to forest.

59 A mahā-fearful carnage followed
between them and their enemies,
with chariots and elephants
caught in a mangled muddle,

60 With bitter hatreds bursting into orgies
of murderous killing, O rājā,
in a brutal battle before sunset
that swelled the population of Yama's kingdom.

61 Chariot-heroes and horse-soldiers
died in thousands.
Wild with rage, Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma,
with sharp arrows,

62 Started another massacre
of the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas' soldiers,
and despatched to Yama's realm
the Pāñcālas as well.

63 Shattering the ranks of the Pāṇḍavas, O king,
the mahā-bowman Bhīṣma
withdrew his forces
and retired to his camp.

64 This is how the straight and curved arrows
of Vṛkodara Bhīma and Dhṛṣṭadyumna
decimated the ranks
of the Kaurava forces.

65 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira saw Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and wolf-waisted Bhīma return;
he smelt their heads,
and retired happily to his camp.

66 So did Arjuna and Vāsudeva-Krishna,
after their display
of arrow-prowess and Kaurava-slaughter
on the battlefield.

SECTION EIGHTY

1 Mahārāja (continued Sañjaya),
dripping with blood, the battle heroes
retired to their respective camps,
harbouring mutual bitterness.

2 After they had rested,
and pūjā-praised each other's feats,
they put on their armour,
and prepared for fresh battle.

3 You son Duryodhana, covered with blood,
O rājā,
approached Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
and enquired in anxious tones:

4 "Our soldiers are brave
and disciplined, flying
the mightiest war-flags;
yet the mahā-chariot-hero
Pāṇḍavas have pierced
and routed us all,

5 Confounding our plans,
and gathering fame.
I am wounded all over
by the death-mace of Bhīma
whose thunderbolt has shattered
our *makara*-strategy.

6 Seeing virulent Bhīma,
    I am afraid, O rājā,
        I lose peace of mind.
O truth-firm preceptor,
    grant us your grace
        to wipe out the Pāṇḍavas."

7 Observing Duryodhana
    profoundly depressed,
        mahātmā Bhīṣma,
war-valiant and wise
    son of Gaṅgā,
        smilingly said:

8 "For your victory and joy,
    I shall make all efforts
        to scatter the ranks
of the formidable Pāṇḍavas.
    I shall not conceal
        myself in your need.

9 The mahā-chariot-heroes
    on the side of the Pāṇḍavas
        are countless and famous,
untiring, accomplished
    in weapons, and spewing
        forth venom in battle.

10 It is far from easy
    to rout them in battle.
        They hate you, O rājā,
they are proud of their prowess.
    But fight them I will,
        with all my ātman.

11 I will offer my life
    in the cause of your victory –
        I promise you this.
For your sake I will battle
    the gods and the Daityas,
        let alone your enemies.

12 I will challenge the Pāṇḍavas
and in doing so achieve
the success of your hopes."
This assurance of Bhīṣma
revived Duryodhana;
his spirits rejoiced.

13 With a heart full of joy
he ordered the kings
and soldiers – "Advance!"
The army of chariots
and elephants and horses
and soldiers obeyed.

14 What an army, O rājā!
What extensive equipment!
What a show of confidence!
What elephants and horses
and soldiers, O rājā –
a beautiful sight!

15 The elephant division
with expert mahouts
appeared from all sides;
the soldiers were led
by experts in offensive
and defensive weapons.

16 And lovely the dust-cloud
obscuring the sun! –
raised by the myriads
of chariots and elephants
and horses and soldiers
shifting positions.

17 Such colourful ranks
everywhere, O rājā,
elephants and chariots
in rows upon rows,
like flashes of lightning
dazzling the sky.

18 A fearful cacophony!
Stretching and twanging
of bows by kings! –
Like the noise of the ocean
primevally churned
by the gods and anti-gods.

19 Your army – its war-cries,
its variety of soldiers,
multiplicity of colours,
ferocity of purpose –
looked like clouds that gather
at the end of a yuga.

SECTION EIGHTY-ONE

1 O finest of the Bharatas! Seeing your son perturbed
(continued Sañjaya),
Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma said these pleasing words
to Duryodhana:

2 "I, Droṇa, Śalya, Kṛtavarman of the Sātvatas,
Aśvatthāman, Vikarṇa, Bhagadatta, Subala's son
Śakuni,

3 Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti, the ruler of Bāhlīka,
The mighty ruler of Trigarata, the formidable
Magadha ruler,

4 The Kosala ruler Bṛhadbala, Citrasena, Viviṁśati,
With thousands of festooned and mahā-beflagged
chariots,

5 With countless local horses driven by expert riders,
Huge elephants, their temples streaming with
rutting juice,

6 Brave flag-waving foot-soldiers
accomplished in all weapons,
coming from many lands –
all will fight for your cause.

7 When soldiers of such calibre
are ready to die for you,
even victory over the gods
is not an impossible task.

8 O rājā! My duty is always to tell you
what is good for you.
The Pāṇḍavas cannot be defeated
even by Vāsava-Indra and the gods.

9 Krishna-Vāsudeva is on their side,
and their prowess equals Mahendra-Indra's.
Still, O Indra-among-rājās,
I will do what you want.

10 Either I defeat the Pāṇḍavas,
or they defeat me."
With these words, Bhīṣma handed over
to Duryodhana
the medicinal herb
known as Viśalyakaraṇī

11 Which has the power to relieve pain
and heal all wounds.
Your son's wounds healed.
Early at dawn, valiant Bhīṣma,

12 Finest of men, accomplished in war strategy,
devised the battle formation
called the Maṇḍala,
deploying a wide variety of weapons.

13 A battle-formation consisting
of crack soldiers,
elephant warriors, thousands of war-chariots,
and others –

14 Also the finest cavalry
armed with swords and spears.
Each elephant had seven chariots,
each chariot seven horse-soldiers,

15 Each horse-soldier ten bowmen,
each bowman seven foot-soldiers.
Encouraged by the mahā-chariot-heroes,
O mahārāja,

16 Your soldiers prepared for battle
under Bhīṣma's leadership.
A thousand horse-soldiers,
and a thousand elephants,

17 Ten thousand chariots,
under the command of your brave sons
dressed in armour, and led by Citrasena,
supported Pitāmaha Bhīṣma.

18 It was a mutually supportive system:
Bhīṣma protected
the armour-clad mahā-powerful rājās,
and they protected him.

19 On the battlefield, armour-clad Duryodhana
in his chariot
looked as handsome as Śakra-Indra himself
in heaven.

20 O Bharata! Your sons' war-cries
and the clatter of chariots
and din of musical instruments
war ear-splitting.

21 That huge, impenetrable maṇḍala-formation
of foe-crushers
headed by Bhīṣma himself
marched relentlessly to the west.

22 It was almost invincible, O rājā,
and it was a sight to behold.
Seeing that incomparable hard-to-defeat
maṇḍala-array,

23 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira deployed his army
in the Vajra-Thunderbolt plan.
After the soldiers had stationed themselves
in assigned positions,

24 The chariot-heroes and horse-soldiers
screamed their war-cries.
Eager for battle, the soldiers prepared themselves
for combat.

25 A frightful battle followed between the heroes
of both armies.
Bhāradvāja-Droṇa a attacked Matsya,
and Aśvatthāman attacked Śikhaṇḍin.

26 Rājā Duryodhana singled out Pārṣata-Drupada
for attack,
Nakula and Sahadeva attacked Śalya,
the king of Madra.

27 Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti
attacked Irāvat.
The remaining kings chose to concentrate
on Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

28 Using all this strength, Bhīma neutralised
Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman's attack.
Your three sons – Citrasena, Vikarṇa
and radiant Durmarśana –

29 Became the targets of Ārjuni-Abhimanyu,
O rājā.
The mahā-bowman Bhagadatta of Prāgjyotiṣa
attacked the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,

30 Rushing fiercely as one musth elephant
attacking another.
The rākṣasa Alambuṣa, O rājā,
fiercely targeted Sātyaki

31 Who was the leader of a vast host
of soldiers.
Bhūriśravas selected brave Dhṛṣṭaketu
for combat.

32 Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira battled
with rājā Śrutāyus,
and Cekitāna's adversary on the field
was Kṛpa.

33 The remaining warriors concentrated
on the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma.
Suddenly a multitude of royal warriors
surrounded Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,

34 Brandishing lances, darts, spears, arrows,
clubs and maces;
and Arjuna, angered,
said to Krishna of the Vṛṣṇis:

35 "Mādhava-Krishna, look at the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
in a battle-array
devised by the mahātmā strategist Bhīṣma,
son of Gaṅgā.

36 Look, Mādhava-Krishna, a gallery of heroes,
all battle-hungry!
See, Keśava-Krishna, the ruler of the Trigartas
with his brothers.

37 In front of your eyes, Janārdana-Krishna,
O finest of the Yādavas,
I will kill all of them
who dare to challenge me today."

38 Saying this, Kuntī's son Arjuna
rubbed his bowstring
and fired a swarm of arrows
at the assembled kings.

39 Fierce bowmen themselves,
they retaliated with a counter-shower,
the arrows streaming like monsoon rain
filling ponds.

40 O lord of the world! Seeing Krishna and Arjuna
arrow-oppressed on the field,
shouts and screams of "Hai! Hai!" were heard
from your soldiers.

41 Even the gods, deva-ṛṣis, gandharvas
and *uraga*-reptiles
were aghust seeing the plight of Krishna
and his double Arjuna.

42 It was then, O rājā, that Arjuna
in violent fury
fired his Aindra-weapon –
a show of splendid prowess!

43 For he neutralised in one stroke
the entire enemy-shower
and simultaneously wounded every warrior,
O lord of the world.

44 O honour-bestowing monarch – all of them –
thousands of rājās, horses and elephants –
some with two arrows each,
others with three,

45 Routed by Pārtha-Arjuna, they sought the help
of Śāntanava-Bhīṣma,
and Bhīṣma saved them from sinking
in that bottomless sea.

46 Fleeing from the terror of the Pāṇḍavas, mahārāja,
your army scattered in confusion,
like waves
in a tempestuous ocean upheaval.

SECTION EIGHTY-TWO

1 The battle continued with Suśarmā fleeing
from the field (said Sañjaya),
after mahātmā Arjuna had decimated
his followers.

2 Your army was in turmoil
like a storm-struck ocean
when Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma decided
to attack Arjuna.

3 Rājā Duryodhana saw Pārtha-Arjuna's brilliance
on the battlefield,
and spoke hurriedly to his generals
and his soldiers.

4 He spoke specially to mahā-powerful Suśarmā,
after which,
standing at their head,
he addressed them all inspiringly:

5 "Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma has planned
to attack Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
in full strength, even if it means
risking his life.

6 Re-form your strength; re-group your men.
Protect Pitāmaha Bhīṣma at all costs
as he launches
the counter-offensive."

7 "It will be done!" the soldiers shouted;
then, mahārāja,
led by Duryodhana, they advanced
near Pitāmaha Bhīṣma.

8 Śāntanava Bhīṣma, marching to fight Arjuna,
suddenly saw
mahā-powerful Bharata Arjuna marching
to fight him.

9 Arjuna stood in his radiant chariot
pulled by white horses,
flying the *vānara*-emblem,
and thundering like storm-clouds.

10 Seeing diadem-crowned Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
bearing down on them,
your soldiers were dismayed,
and panicked in an uproar.

11 They saw Krishna holding the reins
like the sun in its meridian;
blinded,
they dared not even look up.

12 Nor were the Pāṇḍava soldiers able
to look at Bhīṣma,
with his white horses and white bow,
like the white planet Śukra.

13 Surrounding him were the mahātmā Trigartas,
along with their brothers and sons,
and a host
of other mahā-chariot-heroes.

14 Meanwhile, Bharadvāja's son Droṇa wounded
king Virāṭa of Matsya
with one arrow, and sliced his bow and flag
with two more.

15 Virāṭa flung away his damaged bow
and picked up another,
even stronger and bigger
and more flexible,

16 Shooting snake-shaped arrows of venomous power.
He wounded Droṇa
with three arrows,
his horses with four,

17 His flag with one, and his charioteer with five,
and sliced his bow with one.
The bull-brave twice-born hero Droṇa's wrath
knew no bounds.

18 With eight knotted arrows,
Droṇa killed Virāṭa's horses,
and with one winged arrow
he killed Virāṭa's charioteer.

19 Finest-of-chariot-warriors Virāṭa
leapt out
of his horseless chariot
and climbed inside his son's chariot.

20 Father and son combined their energies
to stem
the advance of Droṇa
with a torrent of arrows.

21 Incensed beyond description, Droṇa fired,
O lord of men,
a snake-shaped virulent arrow
at Virāṭa's son Śaṅkha.

22 It pierced Śaṅkha's heart,
draining his life-blood,
and stuck in the ground,
drenched in crimson.

23 Struck by Droṇa's arrow,
Śaṅkha slumped in the chariot
in front of his father,
the bow slipping from his hand.

24 Seeing his son dead,
Virāṭa fled in terror,
leaving Droṇa on the field like Antaka-Death
with wide-gaping mouth.

25 Bharadvāja's son Droṇa repulsed
single-handed
many thousands of soldiers
in the army of the Pāṇḍavas.

26 Mahārāja, Śikhaṇḍin in the meantime
attacked Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman,
wounding his forehead with three swift,
long arrows.

27 Droṇa's son, with three arrows
sticking in his forehead,
looked like Mount Meru
with its three golden peaks.

28 In less than half the wink of an eye,
Aśvatthāman cut down
Śikhaṇḍin's charioteer, flag, horses,
and weapons

29 With a swarm of irresistible arrows.
The excellent chariot-hero Śikhaṇḍin
jumped
out of his horseless chariot,

30 And brandished a sharp, flashing sword
and shield.
Foe-terrorising Śikhaṇḍin roamed the field
like a vulture,

31 And Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
was unable to target him.
Mahārāja, this was a wonderful,
an unbelievable sight!

32 O bull-brave Bharata! Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
in a fit of anger,
fired thousands of arrows
at the elusive Śikhaṇḍin.

33 But Śikhaṇḍin, a warrior incomparable,
kept whirling
his sharp-edged sword,
and deflected the deadly arrows.

34 Aśvatthāman finally succeeded
in shattering
Śikhaṇḍin's hundred-moon-decorated
glittering shield as well as his flashing sword.

35 Aśvatthāman pinned down Śikhaṇḍin
with hundreds of winged arrows.
Śikhaṇḍin, waving wildly on the field
his broken sword,

36 Hurled it at Aśvatthāman
like a fiery snake.
Seeing it whizzing towards him
like the fire of Kāla,

37 Droṇa's son with amazing dexterity
intercepted and smashed it,
and simultaneously fired steel arrows
at Śikhaṇḍin.

38 Grievously injured by those sharp arrows,
Śikhaṇḍin climbed
into the chariot of mahātmā Sātyaki
of the Mādhava race.

39 In a burst of rage,
Sātyaki fired a volley of arrows
at the cruel rākṣasa Alambuṣa,
his bitter enemy.

40 But that excellent rākṣasa, O Bharata,
succeeded in splintering Sātyaki's bow
with a crescent-shaped arrow,
and wounding him.

41 Fabricating a māyā by his special powers,
he overwhelmed Sātyaki with arrows.
We witnessed a marvel
of Sātyaki's

42 When, though severely wounded,
he showed no sign of it.
Indeed, he fitted the Aindra-missile to his bow,
O Bharata,

43 A weapon that he had obtained
from Vijaya-Arjuna himself.
The missile dissipated the māyā
created by the rākṣasa,

44 And drenched Alambusa
with so heavy an arrow-shower
that it seemed monsoon torrents
were rolling down a hill-top.

45 Outwitted and outclassed
by the illustrious Madhu-descendant,
the rākṣasa ran away,
leaving Sātyaki the combat's victor.

46 Routing the Indra-among-rākṣasas
whom even Maghavan-Indra could not humble,
Sātyaki uttered his fierce war-cry
on front of your soldiers.

47 Then famed-in-truth Sātyaki
commenced a methodical slaughter
of your soldiers; terrified, they broke ranks
and fled.

48 Meanwhile, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Drupada's brave son,
O mahārāja,
attacked your son Duryodhana
with fierce knotted arrows.

49 O Bharata! Though oppressed by the arrows
fired by Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
your son did not betray
any sign for fear.

50 O Indra-among-rājās lord-of-men!
He retaliated
with arrows that succeeded
in wounding Drupada's son –

51 First sixty, then thirty, fired in succession –
a wonderful feat!
O gracious monarch! Agitated, the Pāṇḍava general
shattered Duryodhana's bow,

52 And killed all four horses
of your son's chariot,
wounding mahā-powerful Duryodhana
with seven sharp arrows.

53 It was then that mahā-muscled Duryodhana
leapt from his chariot,
and rushed straight, with upraised sword,
at Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

54 In the nick of time, mahā-powerful Śakuni,
devoted to the rājā,
raced his chariot alongside
and sped off with Duryodhana.

55 Defeating Duryodhana, foe-crushing Dhṛṣṭadyumna
began massacring your soldiers
like thunderbolt-wielding Vajrapāṇi-Indra
who exterminated the anti-gods.

56 In another part of the battlefield,
the mahā-chariot-hero Kṛtavarman
cornered Bhīma with arrows as thick as mahā-clouds
obscuring the sun.

57 Foe-smiting Bhīma, angry yet smiling,
counter attacked
with an arrow-swarm that sailed
towards Kṛtavarman,

58 Lacerating him, but the truth-firm Sātvata
stood his ground;
indeed, mahārāja, he retorted with a shower
of sharper arrows.

59 Mahā-chariot-hero Bhīma killed
the four horses of Kṛtavarman
and his charioteer,
and cut down his flag.

60 He harassed Kṛtavarman
with a variety of arrows.
His horses slain, Kṛtavarman stood defenceless,
pinned down by arrows.

61 Mahārāja! Abandoning his chariot,
Kṛtavarman leapt into the chariot
of your brother-in-law Vṛṣaka,
While Duryodhana watched,

62 Bhīma excitedly rushed at your soldiers.
Insensate with fury,
he attacked them like Antaka-Yama
wielding his rod.

SECTION EIGHTY-THREE

1 "Sañjaya," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra, "I have heard
remarkable reports from you
on the combats between my sons
and Pāṇḍu's sons.

2 But you never speak of my soldiers
as being cheerful, Sañjaya.
On the contrary, theirs are always cheerful
and never defeated.

3 My soldiers are depressed, or defeated,
or lifeless.
Such is destiny. What else can it be,
O Sūta?"

4 O bull-brave lord! Your soldiers (replied Sañjaya)
did their best in battle,
displaying what manliness, strength and courage
they possessed.

5 Even as the delicious waters
  of the Gaṅgā,
when they enter the ocean,
  turn salty,

6 So the valour of the warriors of your army,
  facing the Pāṇḍavas
on the field of battle, weakens,
  O foe-smiting rājā.

7 There is no use blaming your warriors,
  O best of the Kauravas.
They performed difficult deeds
  to the best of their power.

8 It is your fault, and your son's fault,
  O lord of the world –
the carnage that has added to the population
  of Death's kingdom.

9 But what good is it grieving, O king,
  over what has happened?
The kings who were going to die
  could not have prevented it.

10 Their aim was to reach the realms
  of the merit-obtainers;
their goal was heaven,
  and that is why they fought.

11 Mahārāja, what a slaughter took place
  that afternoon!
Listen to my report
  of that god-and-antigod butchery.

12 Spotting Irāvat, the two Avanti princes,
  Vinda and Anuvinda,
both mahā-powerful, mahā-bowmen mahā-warriors,
  rushed at him.

13 A horrifying horripilating mahā-encounter!
  Irāvat attacked first,
wounding the two god-like
  Avanti princes

14 With knotted arrows of knify sharpness.
Unperturbed,
they retaliated with a variety
of well-planned counter-showers.

15 O rājā! The combat continued,
each struggling to gain the upper hand,
each equally resourceful
and revengeful.

16 With four swift arrows Irāvat succeeded
in killing, O rājā,
the four horses of the chariot
of Anuvinda.

17 With two sharp *bhalla*-arrows, O gracious monarch,
he sliced the bow
and shredded the flag of Anuvinda.
A wonderful feat, O rājā!

18 Anuvinda abandoned his chariot
and climbed into Vinda's;
he picked up a strong
and excellently flexible bow.

19 Riding in the same chariot,
the two chariot-heroes of Avanti
shot a stream of arrows
at mahātmā Irāvat.

20 The mahā-swift gold-feathered arrows
of the Avanti brothers
flew thickly through the sky,
darkening the sun.

21 Roused to anger,
Irāvat sent a rain of arrows
on the mahā-chariot-hero brothers –
and killed their charioteer.

22 As the charioteer toppled on the ground,
the horses
galloped away helter-skelter
with the driver-less vehicle.

23 Mahārāja, Irāvat was the Nāga princess
Ulūpi's son.
Routing the two borthers, he spread panic
if your army.

24 Reeling from his attack,
the mahā-army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons
swayed to and fro
little a man debilitated by poison.

25 Hiḍimbā's mahā-powerful rākṣasa son Ghaṭotkaca
drove his sun-bright
flag-bedeced chariot
against heroic Bhagadatta.

26 Rājā Bhagadatta, ruler of Prāgyotiṣa,
atop his elephant,
looked like Vajra-dhara-Indra marching out
to humble vicious Tāraka.

27 The gods, gandharvas, and ṛṣis arrived
to witness the battle –
they noticed no difference
between the two heroes.

28 Like furious Śakra-Indra terrorising the Dānavas
in the past,
Bhagadatta, ruler of Prāgyotiṣa,
traumatised the Pāṇḍavas.

29 Unremittingly harassed by him from all sides,
the Pāṇḍavas
could not find one among them to rescue them,
O Bharata.

30 O Bharata! Only one, Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca,
was seen riding in his chariot:
all the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes
had fled the field.

31 A little later, however, they regrouped;
and as they did so, Bharata,
an ear-splitting roar came from your troops
on the field.

[VI:83:32-40]

Transcreated by P. Lal

32 So the mahā-battle started, with Ghaṭotkaca's arrows,
O rājā,
shrouding Bhagadatta as dark rain-clouds
shroud Mount Meru.

33 Rājā Bhagadatta splintered the rākṣasa's arrows
in mid-air,
and succeeded in wounding Ghaṭotkaca
in his sensitive parts.

34 Hurt and bleeding,
Ghaṭotkaca nevertheless stood firm;
undeterred he stood,
like a riven yet steady hill.

35 The Prāgjyotiṣa ruler Bhagadatta
flung fourteen lances
in an orgy of anger,
but Ghaṭotkaca deflected them all.

36 The mahā-muscled rākṣasa blocked those lances
with his arrows,
and he persecuted Bhagadata
with seventy gold feathered shafts.

37 Smiling, the rājā of Prāgjyotiṣa, O Bharata,
fired arrows
that killed the four horses
of the rākṣasa.

38 Standing in his horseless chariot,
the Indra-among-rākṣasas
hurled a *śakti*-missile
at the elephant of Bhagadatta.

39 Bhagadatta neutralised the gold-shafted
murderous missile in mid-air;
it crashed on the ground
in splinters.

40 Seeing his *śakti* disintegrate,
Hiḍimbā's son fled,
as Daitya Namuci fled from Indra
in the distant past.

41 Victorious over the heroic and irresistible,
renowned rākṣasa
whom even the god of death Yama and Varuṇa
could not humble,

42 Bhagadatta rammed his elephant
into the Pāṇḍava ranks,
crushing them as a wild she-elephant
tramples lotus stalks, O rājā.

43 Elsewhere on the field, the Madra ruler Śalya
battled his nephews,
the twin sons of Pāṇḍu,
Nakula and Sahadeva.

44 Sahadeva released a net of arrows
at his maternal uncle,
obscuring him like clouds
shrouding the sun.

45 Though harassed, Śalya was delighted.
In his heart
he cherished a special filial fondness
for the twins.

46 O honour-bestowing monarch!
The mahā-chariot-hero with one arrow
shattered Nakula's flag,
and with another splintered his bow.

47 Thereafter, having destroyed his flag
and his bow,
Śalya killed Nakula's charioteer
with a third arrow,

48 And sent his four horses
to the abode of Yama.
Nakula jumped out of his horseless,
broken chariot,

49 And swiftly climbed into the chariot
of his brother.
The heroic twins, in one chariot,
stretching their bows taut,

50 In a fury of anger and aggression, inundated
the mahā rājā Śalya with arrows.
Deluged by the multitudinosity
of the straight shooting arrows

51 Of his nephews, illustrious Śalya
remained firm as a hill;
smiling, that tiger-among-men
frustrated their impact.

52 Sahadeva, infuriated by Śalya's calm,
fitted an arrow in his bow
and shot it straight at Śalya,
O Bharata.

53 It sped swiftly like Garuḍa,
it penetrated right through
the Madra ruler's body,
and slid into the earth.

54 Grievously hurt, pain coursing through his body,
the mahā-chariot-hero Śalya
slumped in his chariot, mahārāja,
almost in a faint.

55 Seeing Śalya dazed and on the point
of losing consciousness,
his charioteer sped the vehicle away
from the battlefield.

56 Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons saw the Madra ruler
driven away;
thinking that he had been killed,
they lost heart.

57 Having vanquished their uncle in battle,
the mahā-chariot-hero twins
joyfully sounded their conches
and screamed their leonine war-cries.

58 Brimming with joyful confidence,
they attacked your soldiers, O rājā,
like Indra and Upendra attacking hordes of Daityas,
O lord of the world.

SECTION EIGHTY-FOUR

1 The sun was at its height (said Sañjaya)
when rājā Yudhiṣṭhira spotted Srutāyus
and sped towards him
to do battle.

2 He rushed at foe-crushing Śrutāyus
and wounded him
with nine knotted arrows
of brilliant sharpness.

3 Mahā-bowman rājā Śrutāyus withstood the attack
of Dharma's son,
retaliating with a counter-volley of seven arrows
at Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira.

4 They cut through Yudhiṣṭhira's armour,
and sucked his blood
as if draining the very spirit
out of that mahātmā.

5 Livid with anger though seriously wounded,
Pāṇḍu's son recovered sufficiently
to fire a boar's-ear-arrow that hit the chest
of the mahātmā rājā Śrutāyus.

6 With a broad-headed *bhalla*-arrow,
Kuntī's unexcelled chariot-hero son
smashed the flag of mahātmā Srutāyus
out of his chariot.

7 O rājā! Seeing his flag shredded,
Śrutāyus the earth-ruler
pinned Pāṇḍu's son down
with seven finely-sharpened arrows.

8 Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira flamed with rage
like the fire
that devours all creatures inexorably
at the end of a yuga.

9 Mahārāja! Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira's blazing wrath,
the gods, gandharvas, and rākṣasas –
all the worlds –
were filled with anxiety.

10 Only one thought was present
in the minds of all creatures:
This king's fury will consume
the three worlds.

11 O king! In the hope of pacifying Pāṇḍu's son,
the ṛṣis and gods
intoned benedictory chants
for the peace of the worlds.

12 But Yudhiṣṭhira kept licking
the corners of his lips,
and looked like the doom-bringing sun
at the end of a yuga.

13 O Bharata! All the warriors of your army,
O lord of the world,
were overcome by a profound
and dispiriting gloom.

14 Controlling his wrath, mahā-illustrious
Yudhiṣṭhira fired an arrow
that severed Śrutāyus' mahā-bow
near its hand-grip.

15 Pursuing his advantage,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira fired a *nārāca*-arrow
that struck Śrutāyus' chest
in front of all the troops.

16 Then, O rājā, acting with extreme speed,
mahā-powerful Yudhiṣṭhira fired swift arrows
that killed the charioteer and the horses
of mahā-ātmaned Śrutāyus.

17 Alarmed by the valour of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
Śrutāyus abandoned his horseless chariot
and fled hastily
from the field.

18 O rājā! Seeing the mahā-bowman defeated
by Dharma's son,
the soldiers of Duryodhana turned their backs
to the field.

19 Mahārāja, Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
after this impressive feat,
started massacring your troops
like gaping-mouthed Cosmic Time Kāla.

20 Meanwhile, Cekitāna of the Vṛṣṇis
fired an arrow-swarm
on the unexcelled chariot-hero Kṛpa
in the presence of all the soldiers.

21 Kṛpa repulsed the arrows, O rājā,
and fired winged shafts
that wounded Cekitāna
who was fighting cautiously.

22 With a broad-headed arrow, O gracious monarch,
he sliced Cekitāna's bow,
and with dexterous aim
he killed the charioteer of Cekitāna,

23 As well as his horses and the charioteers
of his side-guards, O rājā.
Leaping out of his chariot,
Sātvata-Cekitāna picked up a mace.

24 The excellent mace-wielder Cekitāna
first killed Kṛpa's horses
with his foe-crushing mace
and then felled his charioteer.

25 Kṛpa fired sixteen arrows at Cekitāna
from the ground;
they grazed him and embedded themselves
in the earth.

26 Flaming with rage and eager to kill Kṛpa,
Cekitāna flung his mace
like destroyer-of-citadels Puraṁdara-Indra
hurling his weapon at Vṛtra.

27 Kṛpa let loose hundreds of arrows
that blocked
the flying mahā-mace dizzily speeding
towards him.

28 Drawing his sword from its scabbard,
O Bharata,
with a burst of speed Cekitana ran
towards Gautama-Kṛpa.

29 Kṛpa pushed aside his bow, O rājā,
and unsheathing his sword
he rushed with equal swiftness
towards Cekitāna.

30 Both were valiant,
both possessed the finest swords;
the two heroes clashed,
furiously wielding their shining weapons.

31 Felled by the impact of their swords,
the two bull-brave heroes
collapsed on the earth,
the common refuge of all creatures.

32 They were tired, their limbs were stiff,
they were nearly unconscious.
Moved by friendship,
the ruler Karakarṣa

33 Rushed in his chariot to the rescue
of Cekitāna,
and lifted him up in the presence
of all the soldiers.

34 Similarly, your brave brother-in-law Śakuni,
O lord of the world,
rushed in his chariot and drove off with Kṛpa,
finest of chariot-heroes.

35 Elsewhere, Dhṛṣṭaketu the mahā-powerful warrior,
in extreme anger, O rājā,
afflicted Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas
with ninety arrows.

36 Mahārāja, what a glorious spectacle!
Bhūriśravas standing
with arrows stuck on his chest,
like the sun with its sunrays!

37 Not outdone, Bhūriśravas soon dispossessed
the mahā-hero Dhṛṣṭaketu of his chariot,
after killing his charioteer
and horses.

38 Seeing him chariotless and driverless,
Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas
deluged him
with an arrow-shower.

39 O gracious monarch! Mahā-minded Dhṛṣṭaketu
quickly abandoned his chariot
and climbed into the chariot
of heroic Śatānīka.

40 Eleswhere, Vikaṇa and Durmarṣaṇa,
golden-armoured chariot-heroes,
rushed, O rājā,
to attack Subbadrā's son Abhimanyu.

41 A frenzied combat took place
between them and Abhimanyu, O rājā –
like a disorder in the body,
between wind, bile and phlegm.

42 Abhimanyu smashed the chariots of your sons,
O rājā,
but recalling Bhīma's promise
did not kill them.

43 Supported by thousands of kings on horses,
elephants and chariots,
and seeing Bhīṣma whom even the gods
could not vanquish

44 Proceeding to rescue your sons
from the attack of Abhimanyu
(a mere boy,
yet a mahā-chariot-hero),

45 Kuntī's son white-horsed Śvetāvāhana-Arjuna
said to Vāsudeva-Krishna:
"Drive me to where the chariots are,
O Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna!

46 Guide my horses well, O Mādhava-Krishna,
so that these heroes,
all variously armed,
may not frustrate our plans."

47 Urged by limitlessly energetic Arjuna,
Kuntī's son Arjuna,
Vārṣṇeya-Krishna drove the white-horsed chariot
to the thick of the battle.

48 The moment livid-with-rage Arjuna attacked,
O honour-bestowing monarch,
a deafening mahā-uproar rose
from your assembled soldiers.

49 O rājā! Kuntī's son Arjuna advanced
towards the rājās
who were protected by Bhīṣma,
and said to Suśarmā:

50 "You are a great hero, the very finest.
You hate us. You have wronged us.
The fearful fruits of your misdeed
are yours today.

51 Today I shall despatch you
to the realm of your forefathers."
These bitter words of foe-crushing dreadful-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna –

52 The chariot-hero Śuśarma heard their challenge
only too well,
but refrained from replying tauntingly –
or otherwise.

53 With the help of other valiant rājās,
he attacked Arjuna
from the front, rear,
and left and right.

54 His attack ringed Arjuna inexorably,
Your sons' snd Śuśarmā's arrows
darkened the field,
like clouds the sun.

55 A mahā-gory battle followed between your sons
and the Pāṇḍavas,
in which human blood flowed like water,
O Bharata.

SECTION EIGHTY-FIVE

1 And valiant Arjuna
(Sañjaya continued)
though wounded and sighing like a snake,
destroyed the bows
of the mahā-chariot-heroes
with a shower of arrows.

2 In a trice he had splintered
the bows of the rājās
on the field of battle.
Then, intending to kill them,
mahātmā Arjuna fired
a succession of arrows.

3 They rolled on the field
in the mire of their blood,
their bodies all mangled,
their heads askew,
their armours crumpled,
their breaths dissipated.

4 Oppressed by the arrows
of Arjuna, they fell
and gave up their lives.
Seeing them, the rājā
of Trigarta Śuśarmā
advanced to attack.

5 Thirtytwo supporters
of Śuśarmā struck first
at Pārtha-Arjuna.
They ringed him completely,
and twanging the strings
of their bows, they despatched

6 A cloudburst of arrows,
like rain that deluges
the breast of a hill.
Oppressed by the impact
of the arrows, enraged
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,

7 With a total of sixty
oil-dipped arrows,
killed sixty supporters
of Śuśarmā's flank.
Elated, illustrious
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

8 Eliminated the chariot-heroes.
Then, Jiṣṇu-Arjuna,
O rājā, concentrated
on killing Bhīṣma.
Śuśarmā, witnessing
the deaths of his friends,

9 Sped swiftly, intending
to kill Pārtha-Arjuna
with the help of a vanguard
of rulers. Observing
the plight of Dhanañjaya-
Arjuna, Śikhaṇḍin,

10 Heading a group
of chariot heroes,
rushed to defend him.
Meantime, Arjuna noticed
the Trigarta rājā Śuśarmā
and others advancing,

11 And all on his own,
with his Gāṇḍīva, he routed
and killed them. And now,
he looked out for Bhīṣma,
who was guarded by Duryodhana
and Saindhava-Jayadratha.

12 Intelligent and valiant
and mahā-energetic,
he effected the ploy
of a bypassing skirmish,
and eluding rājā Duryodhana
and Jayadratha and others,

13 He attacked Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma,
his arrows and bow
held firm in his grip.
Then mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira,
in a fury of anger,
rushed also to battle.

14 Avoiding battle with Śalya,
the ruler of Madra,
Yudhiṣṭhira, with Bhīma
and Mādrī's sons Sahadeva
and Nakula, advanced
to clash with Bhīṣma.

15 And Bhīṣma, though fighting
the chariot-heroes
of the Pāṇḍava army,
immediately left them
and sped to do battle
with Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

16 Attacked by Pāṇḍu's sons,
the mahā-chariot-hero
Bhīṣma-mahātmā,
scion-of-Śāntanu-
begotten-on-Gaṅgā,
fearlessly waited.

17 Extremely intelligent
and enormously powerful
rājā Jayadratha
confronted the Pāṇḍava
mahā-chariot-heroes, splintering
their bows with his arrows.

18 Mahātmā Duryodhana,
with poisonous anger,
attacked and wounded
Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma,
the twins and Arjuna,
with fiery arrows.

19 The Pāṇḍavas, lacerated
by the arrows of Kṛpa,
Citrasena and Śala
and Śalya, resembled
the gods when wounded
by the arrows of the Daityas.

20 Ajātaśatru mahātmā
Yudhiṣṭhira saw Śikhaṇḍin's bow
splintered by Bhīṣma;
dismayed and amazed,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
said to Śikhaṇḍin:

21 "You took a mahā-vow
in front of your father:
This is my vow –
I will kill with my arrows
Bhīṣma whose radiance
shines like the sun.

22 Brave one! Where is that promise?
For Devavrata-Bhīṣma
still rules on the field.
Your words are hollow.
Remember your sva-dharma,
your race, and your fame.

23 Witness how Bhīṣma
descends on my soldiers
with radiant arrows,
like Kāla himself
consuming creatures
in a matter of seconds.

24 It is hardly expected
of you that you flee
from the field, forsaking
your friends and your brothers
who are harrassed today
by Śāntanava-Bhīṣma.

25 How strange it is
that panic should seize you
and your face turn white
the moment you see
incomparable Bhīṣma
decimate our army!

26 Come, Śikhaṇḍin, see how
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna fights Bhīṣma
without your knowing it.
You are famed in the worlds –
why then this excessive fear
of Bhīṣma, brave one!"

27 This straightforward rebuke
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
inspired mahātmā
Śikhaṇḍin, O rājā –
he quickly resolved
to seek and kill Bhīṣma.

28 Observing Śikhaṇḍin
advancing like the wind
on his mission of killing,
king Śalya restrained him
with a formidable
irresistible weapon.

29 Glimpsing the weapon
speeding towards him
like a yuga-end fire,
Śikhaṇḍin like Mahendra-Indra
remained unaffected
and calm, O rājā.

30 Serene and confident,
from his mahā-bow he fired
arrow after arrow,
and finally fitted
the Vāruṇa-weapon
as a counter-missile.

31 The gods in the sky
and the kings on earth
saw Śikhaṇḍin baffle
the weapon of Śalya.
O rājā! Mahātmā Bhīṣma,
slicing the bow and flag

32 Of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
on the field of battle,
roared his war-cry.
Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira panicking,
abandoning his bow
and leaving his arrows

33 But clutching his mace
Bhīma ran swiftly
to fight Jayadratha.
And Jayadratha wounded
onrushing Bhīma
wielding the mace

34 With five hundred arrows,
each fatal as Yama's
terrifying rod.
Wolf-waisted Bhīma, ignoring
the arrows, and livid
with violent fury,

35 Destroyed all the pigeon-
complexioned horses
of the Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha.
Your incomparable son
Duryodhana, standing
in his chariot, resembling

36 The rājā of the gods,
arrived on his mission
of wiping out Bhīma,
with his weapons upraised.
Shouting his war-cry,
Bhīma stood ready.

37 Meanwhile, Jayadratha,
frightened by Bhīma,
and bewildered, retreated
to the safety of Śakuni,
Duryodhana and other
sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

38 Roused to anger
by the grouping of Śakuni,
Duryodhana and others,
mace-armed Bhīma
resolved that moment
to kill Jayadratha.

39 When they glimpsed the mace
uplifted like Yama's
annihilating rod,
the Kaurava soldiers,
afraid of its impact,
deserted Duryodhana

40 And fled helter-skelter
in the thick of the battle
that raged there, O Bharata.
Your son Citrasena
remained unperturbed
as the mace sped towards him.

41 Flashing his sword
and wielding his shield,
he leapt from his chariot,
like a lion pouncing
from the crag of a hill,
and surveyed the field.

42 The formidable mace
like a mahā-meteor thudded
on the dazzling chariot,
smashing the structure,
and reducing the charioteer
and horses to dust.

43 What a mahā-marvel!
Your soldiers, O Bharata,
rejoiced exceedingly.
They shouted their war-cries
and pūjā-prasied
the feat of your son.

SECTION EIGHTY-SIX

1 Vikarṇa drove up swiftly (said Sañjaya)
to the unchorioted
illustrious hero Citrasena,
and rescued him in a flash.

2 The turbulent and horrendous carnage
of battle continued,
and Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
fought Yudhiṣṭhira.

3 The Sṛñjaya heroes, with their arrays
of horses, elephants and chariots,
wavered;
they feared for Yudhiṣṭhira's life.

4 But Yudhiṣṭhira, with his twin brothers
Nakula and Sahadeva,
faced calmly the onslaught of Bhīṣma,
the tiger-brave mahā-bowman.

5 Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira shrouded Bhīṣma
with a volley of arrows
that obscured the day-making sun
like clouds.

6 Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma received each volley,
some in hundreds,
some in thousands, with complete equanimity,
O gracious monarch.

7 The cluster of arrows which Bhīṣma fired
in reply
resembled swarms of insects
coursing through the sky.

8 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
fired successive arrow volleys,
so thick that Yudhiṣṭhira
seemed to disappear!

9 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira, roused to anger,
fired a *nārāca*-shaft
at mahātmā Bhīṣma – an arrow resembling
a venomous snake.

10 Mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma disintegrated in mid-flight
that razor-sharp arrow,
and killed the gold-caparisoned horses
of Yudhiṣṭhira.

11 Though his horses were slain,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira kept fighting;
he shot a Kāla-fierce *śakti*-missile
at Bhīṣma,
who pulverised it
with well-aimed knotted arrows.

12 Then Dharma's son jumped down
from his horseless chariot,
and quickly climbed into the chariot
of mahātmā Nakula.

13 Subduer-of-hostile-forts Bhīṣma, infuriated,
rushed towards Nakula and Sahadeva
and deluged them
with arrows.

14 Mahārāja, seeing the twins pinned down
by the arrows,
Yudhiṣṭhira worriedly wondered
how to eliminate Bhīṣma.

15 He summoned the royal heroes
and his kinsmen
and said, "Find a way
of jointly killing Śāntanava-Bhīṣma."

16 Acting on orders from Kuntī's son,
the earth-rulers
devised a circular stranglehold of chariots
around Bhīṣma.

17 O rājā! As if playing a game,
your *pitā* Devavrata-Bhīṣma
picked off one by one the mahā-chariot-heroes
with his sharp arrows.

18 Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira saw Kaurava Bhīṣma
in command of the field,
like a lion-cub harassing
a flock of deer.

19 His awesome appearance and his war-cries
terrified the Pāṇḍavas,
as deer are terrorised
by the sight of a lion.

20 *He is a gust of wind*
fanning a flame
that sweeps through heaps of dry grass –
Such was the perception
of the Pāṇḍava Kṣatriyas
regarding Bhīṣma, the lion of the Bharatas.

21 He chopped off the heads
of chariot-heroes
with the ease of an expert farmer
chopping ripe fruit
off palmyra-trees.

22 Mahārāja,
the heads hit the earth
with heavy thuds
like huge stones falling.

23 The carnage of the battle continued,
a fearful bloodbath,
and mahā-consternation spread
among the soldiers.

24 The battle-arrays had been shattered,
but the Kṣatriyas
continued to challenge each other
to combat.

25 Śikhaṇḍin spotted Bhīṣma
and approached him speedily.
"Wait! Wait!" he shouted
to the Pitāmaha of the Kauravas.

26 Bhīṣma, aware of the feminine past
of Śikhaṇḍin,
ignored the challenge,
and chose to fight the Sṛñjayas.

27 Seeing Bhīṣma approaching,
the Sṛñjayas broke into peals
of fierce war-cries and deafening blowing
of war-conches.

28 *Prabhu!* Lord! The sun was beginning to set
when a ghastly skirmish
took place between the chariot-heroes
and the elephant-warriors.

29 The Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki
assaulted your soldiers with *tomara*-lances
and *śakti*-missiles.

30 Many of your finest heroes were killed
in that clash, O rājā,
but though decimated, O bull-brave Bharata,
your soldiers,

31 Having determined to fight to the end,
did not retreat;
your chariot-heroes organised a fresh attack
on the Pāṇḍavas.

32 O rājā! Harassed by the repeated attacks
of mahā-ātmaned Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
your soldiers uttered heart-rending cries
of mahā-agony.

33 Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti,
both mahā-chariot-heroes,
heard their wailing, and launched an attack
on Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

34 The two mahā-chariot-hero brothers
swiftly slew Dhṛṣṭadyumna's horses
and deluged him
with arrows.

35 The mahā-powerful prince of Pāñcāla
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
leapt out of his chariot
and into that of mahātmā Sātyaki.

36 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
supported by a massive assembly of troops,
rushed to repulse the two foe-smiting princes
of Avanti.

37 Your sons too, O honour-bestowing monarch,
determined to defend
Vinda and Anuvinda,
ringed them in securely.

38 Elsewhere, Arjuna, the bull-brave Kṣatriya,
angrily closed in
on the heroic Kṣatriyas,
like Indra battling the anti-gods.

39 Always eager to please your son,
angry Droṇa
fell on the Pāñcāla forces
like fire consuming cotton.

40 O lord of the earth! Your sons,
led by Duryodhana who had pledged
to protect Bhīṣma,
continued to fight the Pāṇḍavas.

41 O Bharata! By now the sun was a ball of crimson.
Rājā Duryodhana
turned to his soldiers and said to them,
"Waste no time!"

42 Even as they battled,
displaying truly remarkable feats,
the sun vanished from sight
behind the Asta hills.

43 Just before the onset of darkness,
a river of blood,
with jackals in it,
swept across the field.

44 A horrendous sight! –
for the jackals kept howling,
and the spirits of the dead
prowled on the field.

45 And rākṣasas, Pisācas
and other flesh eating creatures
could be seen scavenging
in hundreds and thousands.

46 After defeating the contingent of Suśarmā,
who was helping rājā Duryodhana,
Arjuna retired with his soldiers
to his camp.

47 Yudhiṣṭhira, descendant of the Kauravas,
also retired
with his soldiers and brothers to his camp
at nightfall.

48 Bhīma retired to his camp, O Indra-among-rājās,
after humbling
all the excellent chariot-heroes
led by rājā Duryodhana.

49 That mahā-battle also saw Duryodhana
retire at night to his camp,
all the while protecting
Śāntanava-Bhīṣma.

[VI:86:50-57]

Transcreated by P.Lal

50 Droṇa and his son Aśvatthāman, Kṛpa,
Śalya, Kṛtavarman of the Sātvatas
who formed the Kaurava rear,
also retired,

51 As did Sātyaki, O rājā,
and Drupada's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
after killing many soldiers
on the battlefield.

52 O foe-crushing mahārāja, your soldiers
and those of the Pāṇḍavas
retired to their camps
as night fell.

53 They pūjā-praised each other's exploits –
the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas –
before retiring,
O mahārāja.

54 They made all arrangements for security
by posting sentinels;
they extracted arrows,
and bathed wounds.

55 They were paeaned
by bards and ministrels,
and they passed time singing
and playing musical instruments.

56 That brief interval
was like a taste of heaven.
Not one mahā-chariot-hero spoke a word
concerning the battle.

57 It was a beautiful scene – two armies, O king,
their elephants and horses and men,
peacefully sleeping
that night.

SECTION EIGHTY-SEVEN

1 The Pāṇḍava and the Kaurava rulers
of the world
(continued Sañjaya) slept peacefully,
and prepared for fresh battle.

2 A mahā-deafening tumultuous clamour arose
as both armies marched –
a tremendous noise,
an oceanic din.

3 Rājā Duryodhana, Citrasena, Viviṁsati,
The finest chariot-hero Bhīṣma and Droṇa –

4 These Kaurava chariot-heroes, dressed in armour,
in perfect unity
assembled against the heroes of the Pāṇḍavas,
O rājā.

5 Your *pitā* Bhīṣma, O lord of the earth,
devised a mahā-formation
rivalling the fearful ocean,
its heaving billows being the chariots.

6 Having done so, Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
placed himself at the head,
supported by the southerners,
Mālavas and Avantis.

7 Immediately behind him came illustrious,
heroic Bhāradvāja-Droṇa,
supported by the Pulindas, Pāradas, Mālavas
and Kṣudrakas.

8 Behind Droṇa was the powerful hero Bhagadatta,
O lord of the the world,
supported by the Magadhas, the Kaliṅgas
and the Piśācas.

9 Behind Bhagadatta came Bṛhadbala,
the ruler of Kosala,
supported by the Mekalas, Kuruvindas,
and Tripuras.

10 Behind Bṛhadbala came the brave ruler
of Prasthala, Trigarta,
supported by the Kāmbojas
and thousands of Yavanas.

11 O Bharata! Next, after Trigarta,
the heroic son of Droṇa, Aśvatthāman
whose war-cries reverberated
to the skies.

12 And behind Droṇa's son was rājā Duryodhana,
bringing up
the bulk of the army
with the help of his brothers.

13 Behind Duryodhana came Kṛpa,
the son of Śaradvat.
This was the composition of that huge,
oceanic army.

14 *Prabhu*! Lord! White umbrellas, pennants,
expensive armour of exquisite design
and craftsmanship, and bows glittered
on the field.

15 Seeing that gigantic army,
the mahā-chariot-hero Yudhiṣṭhira
turned to his general Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and quickly said:

16 "Mahā-bowman!
look at this oceanic army-formation!
Let us immediately devise
a superior counter-strategy."

17 Then, mahārāja, Dhṛṣṭadyumna set about
forming the plan called Sṛṅgāṭaka
which devastates
all hostile arrays.

18 The tips of the Horn-Array were Bhīma
and the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,
with thousands of chariots, horses
and foot-soldiers.

19 Its navel was white-horsed Arjuna,
with Krishna as his charioteer;
its stomach was rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
and Mādrī's twins.

20 Rulers of the earth,
brilliant bowmen all of them,
expert strategists all, with their soldiers,
made up the rest.

21 Abhimanyu, the mahā-chariot-hero Virāṭa,
Draupadī's sons, and the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
comprised the rear.

22 Confident of the strength of their strategy,
the Pāṇḍavas, O Bharata,
stood on the battlefield,
waiting for the battle to begin.

23 Conches blaring
Drums sounding
Armpit-slapping
Horrendous war-cries
Shattered the sky.

24 They stood on the battlefield, O rājā,
all the mighty heroes,
staring long and fixedly at each other,
without blinking.

25 They shouted challenges at each other,
calling each by name,
poised to plunge in a gruesome carnage,
O Indra-among-men.

26 Then it began – that terrifying, total battle
of destruction
between your soldiers
and the soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas.

27 O Bharata! Long *nārāca*-missiles rained
on the battling armies,
like a deluge of gaping, venomous,
glistening-snakes.

28 And gleaming *śakti*-missiles too,
polished with oil,
whizzed across like flickering flashes
of lightning, O rājā.

29 Ribboned maces exquisitely worked in gold
sped and fell on the field
like beautiful toppled peaks
of hills.

30 Swords flashed in the sun,
like clear pieces of the blue, O Bharata,
and shields of bull-hide,
begemmed with moons,

31 Littered the field – it was a sight, O rājā,
surpassingly beautiful,
of two massive armies, O ruler of men,
locked in battle.

32 An enchanting sight –
like the gods and the Daityas battling.
The soldiers poured in for combat
from all sides.

33 Royal chariot-heroes of one side clashed
with royal chariot-heroes of the other –
the chariot-axles of both
inextricably jumbled.

34 And elephant-tusk clashing with elephant tusk
produced, O excellent Bharata,
sparkle and smoke from the shock
of the friction.

35 Pierced by lances, the elephant-warriors
who toppled on the ground
looked like uprooted
mountain trees.

36 Mangling each other with spears
and claw-weapons,
brave foot-soldiers of both sides died
agonising deaths.

37 The Pāṇḍava and Kaurava soldiers,
on that field,
had only one mission:
to fire arrows to kill.

38 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma charged straight
into the Pāṇḍavas,
his chariot-clatter and bowstring-twang
striking terror.

39 Led by Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the Pāṇḍavas
vociferrously rushed at Bhīṣma,
determined to destroy
their enemy.

40 And so the battle proceeded
between the Pāṇḍavas, O Bharata,
and your sons, with both heroes caught
in confused grappling.

SECTION EIGHTY-EIGHT

1 So dazzling was he, like the sun itself
(continued Sañjaya)
that the Pāṇḍavas feared to face
enraged Bhīṣma.

2 Ordered by Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
the entire army attacked Bhīṣma
even as he rained
sharp arrows at them.

3 Self-confident Bhīṣma's arrows devastated
the Somakas,
Sṛñjayas, Pāñcālas,
and other illustrious bow-wielders.

4 Though harassed by Bhīṣma's arrows,
the Pāñcālas and Somakas,
in desperation risking their lives,
attacked him furiously.

5 O rājā! That magnificent chariot-hero
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
severed their arms
and then swiftly decapitated them.

6 Your father, strict-vowed *pitā* Bhīṣma
unchtherioted the chariot-heroes
and chopped off the heads
of the great horse-soldiers.

7 Mahārāja, we saw elephants deprived
of their riders;
stunned by Bhīṣma's blows,
they lay like hills on the field.

8 Not one soldier of the Pāṇḍavas
dared face Bhīṣma on the field
except the mahā-powerful
finest-of-chariot-heroes Bhīma.

9 Bhīma launched an attack on Bhīṣma.
A grisly duel
took place between the two heroes –
Bhima and Bhīṣma.

10 And all your soldiers on the field
roared war-cries.
The Pāṇḍavas also shouted
their deafening leonine victory-calls.

11 Rājā Duryodhana and his brothers
circled Bhīṣma
to protect him in that raging sea
of bloodshed.

12 The supreme chariot-hero Bhīma
killed Bhīṣma's charioteer;
the horses dragged the chariot wildly
across the field.

13 O Indra-among-rājās! Bhīma careened across the field
in an orgy of slaughter.
Your son Sunābha decided to restrain
the onslaught of Bhīma

14 With a volley of fierce arrows
he fired seven shafts
of exceeding sharpness,
which infuriated Bhīma even more

15 O Bharata! With a horseshoe-shaped arrow
foe crushing Bhīma
sliced off Sunābha's head;
it rolled on the ground

16 Mahārāja! Seven brothers of Sunābha
saw their mahā-chariot-hero
brother Sunābha killed,
and their fury broke bounds.

17 Ādityaketu, Bahvāśī, Kuṇḍadhāra, Mahodra,
Aparājita, Paṇḍitaka, and Viśālākṣa – all formidable –

18 Seven foe-humiliators, dressed in armour
and shining with weapons,
unitedly rushed to attack
and kill Pāṇḍava Bhīma.

19 With nine winged arrows
that flashed like lightning,
Mahodara struck Bhīma
as Vṛtrahā-Indra once struck Namuci.

20 Ādityaketu struck Bhīma with seventy arrows,
Bahvāśī with five,
Kuṇḍadhāra with ninety,
Viśālākṣa with seven,

21 And foe-annihilating Aparājita, mahārāja,
a mahā-chariot-hero,
struck mahā-powerful Bhīma
with a countless shower of shafts.

22 Paṇḍitaka fired three arrows at Bhīma.
Bhīma ignored these volleys
aimed by his enemies
on the battlefield.

23 Foe-humbling Bhīma,
gripping his bow in his left hand,
fired a knotted arrow
that severed the head

24 Of your son Paṇḍitaka.
The handsome-nosed head,
expertly decapitated by Bhīma,
rolled on the ground.

25 With a broad-headed *bhalla* arrow,
Bhīma lost no time
in sending the mahā-chariot-hero Kuṇḍadhāra
to Death's abode.

26 Infinite-ātmaned powerful Bhīma fitted
another arrow to his bow
and sent it whistling
towards Paṇḍitaka.

27 It pierced Paṇḍitaka,
and embedded itself in the earth,
like a Kalā-impelled snake slithering in
after biting a man.

28 Large-hearted Bhīma remembered the misery
of his brothers in the past,
and with three arrows he decapitated
brave Viśālākṣa.

29 O rājā! With a long *nārāca*-arrow
he struck Mahodara in the chest –
instantly Mahodara fell,
stone-dead.

30 First he sliced Ādityaketu's umbrella, O Bharata;
then, shooting
a specially-sharpened broad-headed arrow,
he decapitated him.

31 Next, turning to Bahvāsī, infuriated Bhīma
used a curved and knotted arrow
to send Bahvāśī
to Yama's abode.

32 O lordof the world! Your other sons panicked;
they recalled Bhīma's vow
in the assembly-hall,
they feared it was coming true.

33 Aghast at the calamity that had claimed
his brothers,
rājā Duryodhana ordered his soldiers,
"Kill Bhīma!"

34 O lord of the world! All your mahā-bowmen sons,
who had witnessed
the deaths of their brothers,
recalled then the warning,

35 So wise and wholesome, that divine-visioned,
mahā-wise Kṣattā-Vidura
had given them.
It was now coming true.

36 Such sane advice – yet you, O ruler of men,
did not listen,
so wrapped were you in greed and folly
and fond affection.

37 The way mahā-muscled Bhīma
is decimating your sons,
it would seem he was born solely
for the destruction of the Kauravas.

38 Drowning in māhā-disconsolate grief,
your son rājā Duryodhana
went to Bhīṣma and said to him
in great sorrow:

39 "Bhīma has killed my heroic brothers
on the field,
and is now spreading death
among the rank and file.

40 You are helping us, I know, but not enough.
You stand in the middle.
I took the wrong path.
Look at my fate!"

41 Your father, Devavrata *pitā* Bhīṣma
(said Sañjaya),
heard those cruel words with tears in his eyes
and said:

42 *"Tāta!* Child, did not I, and Droṇa, and Vidura,
and noble Gāndhārī
warn you about this earlier?
But you would not listen.

43 Did I not ask you, foe-crushing Duryodhana,
not to involve me and ācārya Droṇa
in any way
in this war?

44 This I can tell you in all truth:
whichever son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
fights Bhīma,
will die at his hands.

45 Therefore, rājā, steady your mind.
Resolve firmly to fight the sons of Pāṇḍu,
always keeping heaven
as your goal.

46 Even the gods and antigods led by Indra
cannot defeat the Pāṇḍavas.
Fight if you must. First, steady your mind.
Then fight, O Bharata."

SECTION EIGHTY-NINE

1 "Tell me, Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"what did Bhīṣma,
Kṛpa and Droṇa do,
seeing my sons die one by one?

2 Every day, Sañjaya,
my sons are being wiped out.
O Sūta! Such is my fate.
I am a victim of misfortune.

3 They never seem to win,
they are always losing.
Bhīṣma and Droṇa
and mahātmā Kṛpa,

4 Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas, and Bhagadatta,
Aśvatthāman, and hosts of other brave warriors,
Tāta, dear one,

5 Protect them, but still my sons are dying
on the field.
Tell me, what else can it be
but the work of fate?

6 Foolish Duryodhana has always spurned
my advice.
Repeatedly warned by me, by Bhīṣma and Vidura,
tāta, dear one,

7 And by his mother Gāndhāri seeking his welfare,
my ill-minded son has ignored us.
Let him taste the fruits
of his folly,

8 And watch his brothers, one by one,
day by day,
despatched by infuriated Bhīma
to Yama's abode."

9 O radiant one! (replied Sañjaya)
Kṣattā-Vidura's words have come true.
They were spoken for your good,
but you would not listen.

10 "Stop the dice-game.
Stop this hatred of the Pāṇḍavas."
This was the advice of those
who wished you well –

11 To which you turned a deaf ear,
like a dying man refusing medicine.
You realise too late
their value.

12 You refused the advice of well-wishers
like Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Vidura and others –
and you see
the Kauravas in peril now.

13 O lord of the world!
All this was predicted long ago.
Let me now describe the battle fought
the next day.

14 The mahā-carnage reached its bloody peak
in the afternoon.
It was a gruesome game of butchery.
Listen to me, O rājā.

15 Ordered by Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
the infuriated Pāṇḍava host
concentrated their energies
on killing Bhīṣma.

16 Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍin
and the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki
joined forces, mahārāja,
against Bhīṣma.

17 Virata and Drupada,
with the support of the Somakas,
spearheaded the attack
on the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma.

18 The Kekayas, Dhṛṣṭaketu, and Kuntibhoja,
dressed in armour,
manoeuvred their soldiers, mahārāja,
against Bhīṣma.

19 Arjuna, the five sons of Draupadī,
and powerful Cekitāna
chose Duryodhana and his royal followers
as their targets.

20 Brave Abhimanyu and the mahā-chariot-hero
Haiḍambā-Ghaṭotkaca,
and livid-with-rage Bhīma
attacked the entire Kaurava army.

21 And this was how the Kauravas suffered
from a three-pronged assault,
O rājā – but the Pāṇḍavas suffered
equally grievously.

22 The finest chariot-hero Droṇa
excitedly rushed upon
the Somakas and Sṛñjayas,
despatching many to Yama's abode.

23 The mahātmā Sṛñjayas,
afflicted by the mahā-bowman
Bhāradvāja-Droṇa,
groaned in agony on the battlefield.

24 Countless Kṣatriya heroes,
wounded by Droṇa,
writhed on the ground
like so many helpless epileptics.

25 O Bharata! They whined and moaned
and wailed and screamed
in a confused amalgam,
like men dying of starvation.

26 Mahā-powerful Bhīma, flamingly angry,
continued unchecked his killing
as if he were the doom of Kāla
personified.

27 As the indiscriminate slaughter went on,
gory rivers
flowed on the field,
billowing with human blood –

28 A horrific clash, mahārāja,
between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas,
that increased the population
of Yama's kingdom.

29 Furious Bhīma turned his wrath
on the elephant-warriors
of the Kauravas,
sending many to gruesome deaths.

30 O Bharata! Hit by his *nārāca*-arrows,
the elephants trumpeted in agony
and reeled across the field
before dropping dead.

31 Their trunks chopped off, their bodies mutilated,
O honour-bestowing monarch,
screaming shrilly like cranes,
the huge elephants collapsed.

32 Nakula and Sahadeva together
attacked the cavalry.
The horses decorated with golden chains
and other paraphernalia

33 Were slaughtered in hundreds and thousands;
and everywhere on the field,
O rājā, one could see horses
thrashing in death-throes.

34 A grisly sight – the earth strewn with horses,
O finest of men,
some tongueless, some gasping, some wheezing,
some dead.

35 An awesome sight, O Bharata lord of the world! –
all the rājās
killed by Arjuna in various skirmishes
on the field.

36 Shredded flags, battered chariots,
ripped umbrellas,
torn yak-tail fans, powerful weapons
twisted and splintered,

37 Scattered garlands and golden necklaces,
strewn heads with ear-rings,
bracelets and head-gear
and pennants in heaps.

38 Beautifully designed chariot-bodies with reins
and equipment smashed –
like flowers in springtime sprinkling the earth,
O rājā.

39 O Bharata! Similar scenes of destruction were noticed
on the Pāṇḍava side
when Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma and Droṇa
attacked in anger,

40 And when Aśvatthāman, Kṛpa and Kṛtavarman
attacked – it was exactly the same
as your side suffered
when the angered Pāṇḍavas attacked.

SECTION NINETY

1 O rājā! As the brutal battle continued
(said Sañjaya)
in which so many heroes perished,
Śrīmān Śakuni attacked the Pāṇḍavas.

2 Similarly, foe-destroying Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman
of the Sātvatas
manoeuvred his forces, O rājā,
against the Pāṇḍava ranks.

3 The finest horses of Kāmboja, river-crossing horses,
Horses from Mahī, Sindhu, Āraṭṭa,

4 And excellent breeds from Vanāyu and the hill regions
Surrounded the army of the Pāṇḍavas.

5 Pure-white horses from Tittira, caparisoned
Splendidly in gold and dressed in mail,

6 The best of the breed – these formed the cavalry
Of the Kauravas attacked by Arjuna's son Irāvat.

7 The valiant son of wise Arjuna named Irāvat
was born to him
by his union with the daughter
of the Nāga rājā.

8 Lovely-plumaged Suparṇa-Garuḍa
had killed her husband;
she was depressed, so her māhā-ātmaned father
Airāvata bestowed her on Arjuna.

9 She was influenced by kāma,
so Arjuna took her as wife.
That is how Arjuna's son was born
on another's wife.

10 He was reared among the Nāgas,
and brought up by his mother,
and abandoned by his wicked-ātmaned uncle
who hated Arjuna.

11 When Irāvat learnt that his father Arjuna
was visiting the realm of Indra,
the powerful, virtuous, truth-speaking handsome boy
went there.

12 That mahā-powerful truth-upholding hero
approached Arjuna his father,
and honoured him,
folding his palms in *añjali.*

13 He introduced himself to mahātmā-Arjuna
saying,
"I am Irāvat. May fortune favour you.
Prabhu! Lord! I am your son."

14 He related to Arjuna the details
of the union with his mother,
and Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
immediately remembered.

15 In the palace of the rājā of the gods,
Arjuna embraced-his son
whose virtues equalled his own,
and rejoiced.

16 And Arjuna, in the realm of Indra,
O Bharata king,
affectionately informed his mahā-powerful son
of all that had happened.

17 "When the war starts, my lord-like son,
we will need your help."
Irāvat replied, "I will be there."
He kept his word,

18 O king, arriving with a countless contingent
of many-hued horses,
swift horses, caparisoned
with exquisite gold trappings.

19 They appeared on the field, O rājā,
like flocks of *haṁsa*-swans
on the billowy bosom of the ocean.
Clashing with yours,

20 O rājā, they dashed head-on
with chests and muzzles;
reeling under the impact, many tottered
and fell on the ground.

21 When the two contingents of horses
clashed head-on,
a fearful noise like Garuḍa's wings flapping
was heard.

22 O rājā, the riders of those horses,
as they charged at each other,
started an orgy
of mutual slaughter.

23 In the dizzy swirl of the carnage,
some horses
panicked and bolted,
running crazily on the field.

24 And their arrow-pierced riders,
with their horses killed,
tiredly struck at each other
with sharp swords.

25 After most of the cavalry had been decimated,
O Bharata descendant,
Śakuni's younger brothers marched into battle,
leading their soldiers.

26 On horses that were wind-swift
and charging with storm-like ferocity,
excellently trained, young and good-looking,
freshly recruited,

27 The six powerful heroes rode out from the Kaurava
ranks:
Gaja, Gavākṣa, Vṛṣabha, Carmavat, Ārjava and Śuka.

28 Overruling the advice of Śakuni,
and the warning of other leaders,
the brilliant, mahā-powerful, fierce, brave brothers
galloped to battle.

29 They pierced through Irāvat's undefeated cavalry,
O mahā-muscled monarch,
aiming at victory, ready to enter
the realm of heaven.

30 Effortlessly they penetrated Irāvat's horse defences,
those six Gāndhāra heroes.
Valiant Irāvat saw them
and, exulting,

31 Ordered his ornamented and weaponed soldiers:
"Adopt desperate tactics.
See that all the soldiers
of Duryodhana

32 Are destroyed, with all their chariots
and weapons."
"It will be done," replied the soldiers
of Irāvat,

33 And frustrated the cavalry and foot-soldiers
that were considered invincible.
Seeing their assault
frustrated by Irāvat,

34 In a fury of revenge, Śakuni's brothers
charged concertedly at Arjuna's son,
completely hemming him in
on all sides.

35 Shouting commands at their men,
and hurling sharp lances at Irāvat,
they galloped across the field
creating mahā-havoc.

36 Wounded by the lances of these mahātmā brothers,
blood pouring down his body,
Irāvat stood firm
like a hook-gouged elephant.

37 O rājā! He was all alone, attacked by many,
pierced in chest, back, and sides –
but he stood patient
and unmoved.

38 Then he could no more control his anger.
Irāvat, subduer of cities,
fired stone-sharpened arrows,
and rendered his foes unconscious.

39 He slowly pulled out the *prāsa*-lances
from his body,
and hurled them back at the brothers
of Śakuni.

40 Unsheathing his sword, and fastening his shield,
Irāvat swiftly
sprinted across the field
charging straight at the Saubala-brothers.

41 They had recovered consciousness by this time.
Anger possessed them,
and they prepared
for a fresh united attack.

42 Proud Irāvat came flashing across the field
at them, brandishing his sword
with amazing dexterity,
intent on killing them.

43 Astride swift horses, the sons of Subala
still had difficulty
in pinning down the elusive and nimble hero
Irāvat.

44 But finally they succeeded in locating him
as he paused,
and they closed in on him,
attempting to capture him.

45 Foe-annihilating Irāvat, finding them so near,
mangled their bodies with his sword,
alternating it
in his right and left hands.

46 He sliced the ornamented arms
of the great heroes.
One by one they fell on the ground,
mutilated, and died.

47 Mahārāja, only one survived – Vṛṣabha.
Mangled beyond recognition,
he somehow managed to escape
that mahā-gory slaughter.

48 Your son Duryodhana, witnessing the butchery
of Śakuni's brothers,
angrily said
to the fearful rākṣasa,

49 The brilliant foe-subduing mahā-bowman
with supreme powers of māyā,
Ṛ ṣyṣṛṅ ga's son Alambuṣa,
sworn enemy of Bhīma
since the day Bhīma killed
the anti-god Baka:

50 "Look at the feat of Phālguna-Arjuna's son
who seems to be versed in māyā!
He insults me
by slaughtering my soldiers!

51 You too can roam where your mind wills,
you are skilled in māyā-weapons,
you are Bhīma's enemy.
Tāta! My friend! Kill Irāvat!"

52 "So be it!" replied Alambuṣa and,
screaming his war-cries,
the horrific-looking rākṣasa rushed
to combat Arjuna's son.

53 Alambuṣa was supported by countless warriors
wielding *prāsas*,
lance-carrying veterans,
accomplished in group combat.

54 He had two thousands horses with him,
survivors of the carnage,
his sole mission, mahārāja –
to slay mahā-powerful Irāvat.

55 Nimble and experienced-in-war Irāvat
was also roused to great anger,
and prepared adequately
to confront the rākṣasa.

56 Spotting Irāvat, the super-mahā-powerful
rākṣasa Alambuṣa
quickly executed a series
of deceptive māyā-tactics.

57 Such a māyā! Two thousand horses appeared
from nowhere on the field,
all mounted by *sāla*-spear
and axe-wielding rākṣasas.

58 Those two thousand well-trained horses
advanced and clashed
with Irāvat's cavalry, each despatching the other
to the realm of the spirits.

59 With their respective supports destroyed,
Irāvat and Alambuṣa
clashed in duel,
like Indra and Vṛtra.

60 Irāvat saw the gigantic,
mahā-powerful, invincible rākṣasas
lumbering towards him,
and steeled himself.

61 As soon as he came within striking distance,
Irāvat whirled his sword
and sliced Alambusa's bow and quiver
into dazzling segments.

62 Seeing his bow shattered,
he shot off into the sky,
using his māyā-power to confuse
the agitated Irāvat.

63 Irāvat also leapt up skywards,
and produced
his own special māyā
with which he cancelled

64 The willed apparitions of the rākṣasa.
In addition,
he chopped off Alambusa's limbs
again and again,

65 But each time, mahārāja,
the limbs grew again.
Māyā is natural to rākṣasas,
who assume form at will.

66 The chopped limbs of the rākṣasa
glittered on the ground.
Incensed, Irāvat continued slashing
at the mahā-powerful rākṣasa

67 With his sharp battle-axe,
in a paroxysm of rage.
Lacerated and mangled
by the strokes,

68 The rākṣasa emitted
a weird heart-chilling scream;
blood was spurting profusely
from his battle-axed wounds.

69 Ṛṣyśṛṅga's son saw his adversary
gaining the upper hand,
and bursting with fury
he summoned all his strength.

70 He assumed an eerie giant shape
and attempted
to shock and capture Irāvat,
the heroic son of Arjuna.

71 While the battle raged,
in front of all the soldiers,
seeing the māyā concocted
by the ill-minded rākṣasa,

72 Highly incensed Irāvat countered
with even more potent māyā.
So great was Irāvat's rage
that he fought blindly,

73 And it was then that a Nāga related to him,
through his mother,
helped him. Surrounded by many other Nāgas,
O rājā,

74 He appeared in the massive shope of Ananta
the cosmic serpent,
and with a host of snakes
he straddled the great rākṣasa.

75 Alambuṣa reacted swiftly, and instantly
became Suparṇa-Garuḍa the bird-deity,
and devoured
all the Pannaga-snakes.

76 With his relative, the Ananta-assumer's hosts
devoured by Alambuṣa's māyā,
Irāvat faltered,
and immediately Alambuṣa decapitated him.

77 Sliced by the rākṣasa, Irāvat's head,
lovely with glittering ear-rings and diadem,
moon-and-lotus-bright,
rolled on the ground.

78 With the slaughter of Arjuna's son
by the rākṣasa,
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons and their royal followers
regained confidence.

79 It was unbelievable –
the mahā-bloodshed that took place
during that horrendous battle
between the two armies.

80 In the mêlée, horses, elephants and soldiers
were destroyed by elephants,
and chariots, horses, and elephants
by foot-soldiers.

81 Soldiers and chariot-heroes and horses,
of your army
and the Pāṇḍavas' army,
were destroyed by chariot-heroes.

82 Arjuna, unaware of the death
of his son Irāvat,
continued his slaughter of the rājās
who protected Bhīṣma.

83 Your soldiers and the Sṛñjayas, O rājā,
perished on the field
in hundreds of thousands
in their assaults on each other.

84 Hair dishevelled, arrows, swords and bows
sliced piecemeal,
many uncharioted chariot-heroes fought on
with their bare hands.

85 Foe-punishing Bhīṣma upset all the Pāṇḍavas
with his systematic slaughter
of mahā-chariot-heroes
with his flesh-lacerating arrows.

86 Bhīṣma singly was responsible for the deaths
of countless thousands
of elephants, horses and chariot-heroes
of Yudhiṣṭhira.

87 It was a battle that revealed, O Bharata,
the feats of Bhīṣma –
we were witness to feats equalling
those of Śakra-Indra.

88 Fearful were the combats fought, O Bharata,
by Sātyaki and Bhīma
and Pārṣata Dhṛṣṭadyumna, all brilliant bowmen,
in different parts of the field.

89 "Droṇa can singlehanded kill all of us,"
thought the fearful Pāṇḍavas;
"what can he not do when assisted
by an entire army?

90 Now he has valiant earth-lords helping him!"
O mahārāja,
these were the words of the Pāṇḍavas
afflicted by Droṇa's attacks.

91 No one was spared, O bull-brave Bharata,
by the heroes
of the two armies, who fought without
any respite.

92 *Tātā!* Respected one! The mahā-powerful bowmen
fought like fierce rākṣasas,
as if ghosts had possessed them
on the battlefield.

93 I saw no one who fought
as if he valued his life
in that hero-exterminating war resembling
a war of Daitya-antigods.

SECTION NINETY-ONE

1 "Tell me, Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"the reactions
of the Pāṇḍava maha-chariot-heroes
to Irāvat's death."

2 The slaughter of Irāvat (replied Sañjaya)
so agitated
Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca that he screamed
in mahā-agony.

3 He screamed, and the ocean-and-mountain-
and-forest-covered earth,
O rājā, shuddered in the reverberation
of his roaring,

4 As did the sky and main and subsidiary quarters.
O Bharata descendant,
your soldiers heard the vibrating noise
of the mahā-roars,

5 And their thighs were petrified,
their bodies trembled;
they perspired, and were plunged, mahārāja,
in deep depression.

6 They fled like an elephant herd
mauled by a lion.
The rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca continued roaring,
like the rumble of thunder,

7 And brandishing his dazzling trident,
and assuming a weird form,
ringed by ferocious bull-brave rākṣasas
armed with various weapons,

8 He strode massively forth
like Antaka-Kāla on doomsday.
Observing the excited, frightening hero
lumbering towards him,

9 And noticing how his soldiers looked away
from the field
in fear of Ghaṭotkaca, rājā Duryodhana
prepared for battle,

10 Screaming leonine roars and brandishing
his strung bow.
Following him, with rutting juice
streaming down their temples,

11 Were the ten thousand elephants
of the king of Baṅga.
Seeing your son marching
with a huge elephant army,

12 The night-ranging Ghaṭotkaca was further inflamed,
O mahārāja,
and a battle of horripilating tumultuousness
took place

13 Between the rākṣasas and Duryodhana's soldiers.
O Indra-among-rājās!
Seeing that army of elephants
like thick sky-masking clouds,

14 The infuriated rākṣasas charged at it,
brandishing their weapons
and roaring – looking like swarms
of lightning-flecked clouds.

15 They slaughtered the warriors
riding on elephant-backs
with arrows, darts, swords, spears, lances,
clubs and axes.

16 They crushed the elephants with huge stones
and tree-trunks.
Temples lacerated, thighs ripped,
bodies sticky with blood,

17 The elephants were butchered, mahārāja,
by the night-prowling rākṣasas.
After the elephant army
had been decimated,

18 Duryodhana himself, roused to feverish anger,
risking his life,
mahārāja, charged into the centre
of the rākṣasa ranks.

19 The foe-crushing hero fired volley upon volley
of sharp arrows
at the rākṣasas, killing many of them
almost instantly.

20 O incomparable Bharata! In his uncontrollable fury,
your chariot-hero son Duryodhana
killed Vegavān, Mahāraudra,
Vidyujjihva, Pramāthi –

21 Four rākṣasas – with exactly four arrows.
Then, again,
the mahā-powerful illimitably-ātmaned hero
released an arrow-shower,

22 O finest of the Bharatas, on the night-prowlers.
O honour-bestowing monarch,
seeing this magnificent feat
of your son Duryodhana,

23 Bhīma's mahā-powerful son Ghaṭotkaca flamed
into anger again,
and stretching his huge bow,
as dazzling as Indra's thunderbolt,

24 He attacked foe-crushing Duryodhana
with extreme ferocity.
Seeing him rushing like Death
encouraged by Cosmic Time Kāla,

25 Mahārāja, your son Duryodhana stood his ground.
Cruel Ghaṭotkaca,
eyes copper-bright with anger,
said to Duryodhana:

26 "Today I will pay back the debt I owe
my mother and father
whom you cruelly exiled for so long
to the forest!

27 You cheated, and defeated Pāṇḍu's sons at dice,
O rājā!
Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī herself, in her period,
wearing a single garment,

28 Was dragged by you, you wicked-minded wretch,
and insulted in the sabhā again and again.
From the āshram, your well-wisher,
ill-ātmaned

29 Jayadratha, ruler of the Sindhus,
tried to abduct her,
dishonouring my elders.
Family-disgracer! For these insults,

30 And others, I will today take revenge –
if you don't turn tail!"
Saying this, Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
pulled taut his mahā-bow,

31 Bit his lips and licked the corners
of his mouth,
and fired a deadly shower of arrows
on Duryodhana
that fell like rivers of rain on hill-tops
in the monsoon.

SECTION NINETY-TWO

1 O Indra-among-rājās! Fearful even to Daityas,
  that deluge of arrows (continued Sañjaya)
was calmly received by Duryodhana
  like drizzle on a mahā-mountain.

2 Hissing like a Pannaga-snake
  and livid with fury,
your son Duryodhana, O bull-brave Bharata,
  exposed himself to danger.

3 He fired twentyfive extremely sharp
  nārāca-arrows
that sped through the air, O rājā,
  and struck the bull-brave rākṣasa

4 Like spitting poisonous snakes falling
  on Gandhamādana-mountain.
Wounded and bleeding profusely,
  like a rutting elephant,

5 The night-prowling rākṣasa determined
  to kill rājā Duryodhana.
He picked up a rock-pulverising
  mahā-*śakti*-missile

6 That flamed like a meteor
  and dazzled like lightning;
mahā-muscled Ghaṭotkaca raised it high
  to kill Duryodhana.

7 Seeing him lift the *śakti*-missile,
  the king of Baṅga
drove his hill-huge elephant straight
  at the rākṣasa.

8 Riding his splendid elephant,
  a beast strong and swift,
he reached the spot where Duryodhana's chariot
  was stationed,

9 And used the elephant as a buffer
  between the rākṣasa and Duryodhana.
Seeing Duryodhana's chariot blocked
  by Baṅga's clever manoeuvre,

[VI:92:10-18]

Transcreated by P. Lal

10 Ghaṭotkaca, his eyes blazing with anger,
mahārāja,
hurled the mahā-*śakti*-missile
at the stationary beast.

11 O rājā! As the missile struck,
fired violently by Ghaṭotkaca,
the elephant fell, bled copiously,
and perished.

12 The powerful ruler of Baṅga quickly
leapt down
the elephant's back
and stood firmly on the ground.

13 Duryodhana saw the huge elephant killed,
and his soldiers demoralised,
and fell prey
to inconsolable grief.

14 He doubted if he would ever be able
to rout Ghaṭotkaca.
But keeping Kṣatriya-dharma in mind,
and summoning
all his self-confidence, rājā Duryodhana
stood firm as a mountain.

15 Fitting fiery arrows to his bow –
as radiant as the flames of Kāla –
he shot them angrily
at the night-prowler.

16 Mahātmā Ghaṭotkaca with extreme agility
dodged all the arrows
that sped towards him
like Indra's thunderbolts.

17 Eyes bright red with wrath, he roared.
His roars
reverberated in the field like storm-clouds
at the end of a yuga.

18 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma, hearing the fearful roars
of the rākṣasa,
approached ācārya Droṇa,
and said:

19 "I can hear the roars of Ghaṭotkaca
the rākṣasa.
I think Hiḍimbā's son is clashing
with rājā Duryodhana.

20 No one else can defeat this rākṣasa
on the battlefield.
Go, therefore, and save the rājā.
May you prosper!

21 Mahā-fortune-favoured Duryodhana is attacked
by a mahā-ātmaned rākṣasa.
O foe-chastisers! You duty is clear!
Our duty is clear!"

22 Acting on these orders from Pitāmaha Bhīṣma,
the mahā-chariot-heroes under Droṇa
speedily advanced
to defend Duryodhana.

23 Droṇa, Somadatta, Bāhlīka, Jayadratha,
Kṛpa, Bhūriśravas, Śalya, the two Avanti princes,
Bṛhadbala,

24 Aśvatthāman, Vikarṇa, Citrasena, Viviṁśati –
These and thousands of other chariot-heroes

25 Marched swiftly with the express purpose
of protecting your son Duryodhana.
The mahā-chariot-heroes
comprised an invincible force.

26 Best-of-rākṣasas Ghaṭotkaca saw
the reinforcements marching;
mahā-muscled Ghaṭotkaca remained as unmoved
as Mount Maināka,

27 Firmly gripping his gigantic bow
and drawing strength
from his kinsmen armed with clubs, tridents,
and many other weapons.

28 A horrendous horripilating encounter
then erupted
between the rākṣasas's kinsmen
and the followers of Duryodhana.

29 On every side of the battlefield,
one could hear, mahārāja,
bows twanging
like bamboos crackling in a bonfire.

30 O rājā! The clanging of weapons smiting
thick coats of armour
sounded like mountains breaking apart
in an earthquake.

31 And spears hurled by the brave warriors
coursed through the air,
O lord of the world,
like hundreds of venomous snakes.

32 Roused to total fury, the mahā-muscled-rākṣasa,
that Indra-among-rākṣasas,
stretched his mahā-bow fully taut,
and uttered a blood-curdling yell.

33 With a crescent-shaped arrow he splintered
ācārya Droṇa's bow;
smashing with a *bhalla*-arrow Somadatta's flag,
he yelled again.

34 With three arrows he wounded Bāhlīka
in the chest;
he pierced Kṛpa with one
and Citrasena with three.

35 With another arrow of amazing precision
fired from a fully taut bow,
he wounded Vikarṇa
near the neck.

36 Blood gushing from his wound,
Vikarṇa slumped in his chariot.
Selecting fifteen sharp *nārāca*-arrows,
illimitably-ātmaned Ghaṭotkaca

37 Fired at Bhūriśravas. O bull-brave Bharata,
the arrows sliced through his armour
and fell on the earth,
one after the other.

38 He wounded the charioteer of Viviṁśati
and the charioteer of Droṇa's son;
they fell fatally, their hands losing their grip
on the reins.

39 With a crescent arrow he shredded-Jayadratha's
boar-emblemed, gold-worked flag;
with another arrow, mahārāja,
he sliced his bow.

40 His eyes flaming with rage,
with four *nārāca*-arrows
he wasted the four horses
of the mahā-ātmaned princes of Avanti.

41 After which, mahārāja, he stretched his bow
fully taut
and wounded prince Bṛhadbala
with a stone-sharpened arrow.

42 Groaning with pain, Bṛhadbala slumped
in the seat of his chariot.
From his chariot's vantage,
the raging rākṣasa

43 Fired volleys of sharp, snake-venomous arrows
which whizzed through
the thick of the battle, mahārāja,
and wounded Śalya.

SECTION NINETY-THREE

1 Forcing your soldiers to turn their faces
from the field, O excellent Bharata,
(continued Sañjaya), the rākṣasa attacked Duryodhana,
with intent to kill.

2 Seeing him rushing at their rājā,
your formidable soldiers
intercepted him in the hope
of killing him.

3 The mahā-chariot-heroes stretched
then palmyra-tall bows,
screamed leonine war-cries,
and isolating him,

4 They poured on him
a veritable deluge of arrows,
like clouds overwhelming a mountain
with autumn showers.

5 Bleeding like a hook-gored elephant,
the rākṣasa soared
into the sky like Garuḍa,
the bird-deity son of Vinatā.

6 He roared like the reverberation
of autumn clouds
and the screaming vibrations
filled the main and subsidiary quarters.

7 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira heard the rākṣasa's roars,
O excellent Bharata,
and, turning to foe-crushing Bhīma,
he said:

8 "It must be the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
battling Dhṛtarāṣṭra's
maha-chariot-heroes –
only his war-cries can carry so far.

9 That bull-brave rākṣasa has a heavy mission
to carry out,
for enraged Bhīṣma is busily exterminating
the Pāñcālas,

10 Whom Phālguna-Arjuna is at present defending.
O maha-muscled one,
we have two tasks,
both demanding quick action.

11 Proceed immediately to Haiḍimbā-Ghaṭotkaca
who needs help."
Acting promptly on the instructions of his brother,
wolf-waisted Bhīma

12 Entered the battlefield, with leonine war-cries,
O rājā,
like the surge of the ocean
on full-moon or new-moon nights.

13 Supporting him were Satyadhṛti, invincible Saucitti,
Śreṇimān, Vasudāna, the Kāśī-ruler's son Abhibhū,

14 The mahā-chariot-hero sons of Draupadī, led by
Abhimanyu,
Illustrious Kṣatradeva, Kṣatradharmā,

15 The king of Anūpadeśa named Nīla with his army.
They surrounded Ghaṭotkaca with their chariots.

16 With six thousand war-maddened elephants,
these heroes
formed a defence-pattern
around the Indra-of-rākṣasas Ghaṭotkaca.

17 The earth shook with their mahā-war-cries,
with the clatter of their chariot-wheels,
with thudding hooves
of galloping cavalry.

18 The cacophony of the advancing army
was such
that the soldiers of your army paled
at the very thought of Bhīma.

19 Mahārāja! Ignoring Ghaṭotkaca
who was ringed by an impenetrable defence,
your never-retreating soldiers chose
another part of the field

20 For a decisive and bloody battle
with the Pāṇḍava force.
Mahā-chariot-heroes employed weapons
of all kinds,

21 Lunging and plunging at each other.
A dreadful clash,
calculated to send shivers of mahā-terror
in cowards' hearts.

22 Cavalry fought elephants,
and foot-soldiers fought chariot-heroes;
shouting, screaming, taunting,
they clashed, O rājā.

23 So intense was the mêlée of chariots, horses,
elephants and soldiers
that coagulated chariot-wheel dust
clouded the battlefield.

24 O rājā! A reddish-brown dusty smoky haze
blurred the field
till none could distinguish
between friend and foe.

25 Father could not make out son,
nor son father,
in that horripilating horror where no quarter
was given or taken.

26 O Bharata! The clang of weapons
and the screams of the soldiers
sounded like the wailing of spirits and ghosts,
O most excellent Bharata.

27 A river started flowing
on the field
its waters the blood
of horses and elephants and humans
its weeds and moss
the hairs of the soldiers.

28 A mahā-ear-splitting noise
like rocks falling
was heard each time
a severed head
dropped on the field.

29 The ground was littered
with headless bodies
mangled elephants
butchered horses
and chopped limbs.

30 Striking with all the strength at their command,
mahā-chariot-heroes
rushed recklessly at each other
with deadly weapons.

31 Spurred by their riders, horses dashed headlong
into each other,
and dropped dead from the force
of the impact.

32 Eyes burning with anger, soldiers met
and struck
each other violently in the chest,
and fell down dead.

33 Urged by their mahouts,
elephants gored other elephants
with their tusks
in the course of that savage battle.

34 They looked like clouds flecked
with lightning flashes –
the bloodied elephants with war pennants
fluttering high.

35 They roamed over the field like clouds –
the elephants
with tusks gashed and temples torn
by broad-headed arrows.

36 They looked like mountains with small peaks
shorn off –
the elephants with sliced trunks
and bodies severely mutilated.

37 They looked like mountains with red-chalk
streaming down their slopes –
the elephants with blood flowing down
their shredded flanks.

38 They looked like mountains
with their crests toppled –
the lance-pierced elephants
with their mahouts killed.

39 Rutting juices flowing, inflamed beyond control,
many elephants went amok,
crushing horses, chariots,
and soldiers.

40 And horses also, wounded by spears and arrows
from enemy cavalry,
charged blindly at any and everyone,
in all directions.

41 Noble chariot-heroes from the best families,
recklessly risking their lives,
fought continuously with all their śakti
with their formidable adversaries.

42 Seeking only heaven or fame, O rājā,
the heroes attacked each other,
like competing suitors for a bride
at a mammoth *svayamvara.*

43 While that horripilating carnage continued,
the soldiers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's huge army
were forced to consider
the expedience of retreating.

SECTION NINETY-FOUR

1 Rājā Duryodhana, infuriated by the rout
of his soldiers
(continued Sañjaya), launched a vicious attack
on foe-crushing Bhīma.

2 Using a mahā-bow that had the impact
of Indra's thunderbolt,
he fired a swarm of arrows
on the son of Pāṇḍu.

3 Fitting a crescent arrow,
lovely-feathered and stone-sharpened,
he fired with such rage that Bhīma's bow
was sundered.

4 Seizing his opportunity,
  the mahā-chariot-hero Duryodhana
quickly fitted another special arrow
  capable of smashing rocks,

5 And fired it with deadly accuracy, mahārāja,
  at Bhīma's chest.
Screaming in agony,
  licking the corners of his mouth,

6 Bhīma leaned against his gold-filigreed flagstaff
  for support.
Seeing Bhīmasena in distress,
  rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca

7 Blazed up in anger, like an all-devouring
  fierce conflagration.
The Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes,
  led by Abhimanyu,

8 Charged headlong at rājā Duryodhana
  with frenzied war-cries.
Seeing all those heroes rushing
  in reckless haste,

9 Bharadvāja's son Droṇa said
  to his mahā-chariot-heroes:
"Hurry to the rescue of the rājā!
  May you succeed!

10 Go, plunge in that perilous ocean,
  and save him!
The enraged-mahā-bowmen and chariot-heroes
  of the Pāṇḍavas,

11 Led by Bhīma, have singled out Duryodhana
  for destruction.
Look at them firing their weapons,
  hoping for success,

12 Screaming their war-cries and spreading panic
  in the ranks of our army!"
Taking ācārya Droṇa's cue, under the command
  of Saumadatti-Bhūriśravas,

13 Your soldiers organised a sortie
against the Pāṇḍavas,
involving Kṛpa, Bhūriśravas, Śalya, Aśvatthāman,
Viviṁśati,

14 Citrasena, Vikarṇa, the Sindhu ruler Jayadratha,
Bṛhadbala
and the two Avanti princes,
who protectively ringed Duryodhana.

15 Marching only twenty steps forward,
the Pāṇḍava and the Kauravas,
variously armed, fell murderously
at each other.

16 After giving advice, the mahā-muscled son
of Bharadvāja, Droṇa,
pulled his bow taut and wounded Bhīma
with twentysix arrows.

17 Mahā-muscled heroic Droṇa deluged Bhīma
with another arrow-shower,
like clouds drenching hills
in the monsoon.

18 Mahā-powerful mahā-bowman Bhīma, unperturbed,
retorted
by wounding Droṇa's left rib
with ten sharp arrows.

19 O Bharata! Pierced by arrows, overcome by pain,
weary with age,
Droṇa slumped inside his chariot
in a semi-faint.

20 Seeing guru Droṇa in such dire distress,
rājā Duryodhana
and Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
angrily charged at Bhīma.

21 Mahā-muscled Bhīma saw them rushing at him
like the doom-day of Kalā-Antaka,
and quickly prepared himself
with his mace;

22 He jumped off his chariot,
and stood hill-steady,
lifting his massive mace
like the rod of Yama.

23 Duryodhana and Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
saw him standing
with his mace like Mount Kailāsa,
and they attacked furiously.

24 Vṛkodara-Bhīma also stirred
and rushed against the two
magnificent heroes who had made him
their target.

25 It was a terrifying darshan they had
of infuriated Bhīma,
but the Kaurava chariot-heroes
had prepared for the worst.

26 Led by Bharadvāja's son Droṇa,
united in their mission
to kill Bhīma, they deluged him
with fatal missiles,

27 And cornered him into a state
of near-helplessness.
Seeing the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīma
isolated and imperilled,

28 Abhimanyu and other Pāṇḍava
mahā-chariot-heroes,
risking their lives,
plunged in to rescue him.

29 The brave ruler of Anūpadeśa, Nīla,
the handsome sky-blue-skinned
loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friend of Bhīma,
challenged Aśvatthāman,

30 Whom he had long desired to meet in combat.
Pulling taut his mahā-bow,
he fired winged shafts
at Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman,

31 Wounding him as, in the distant past, mahārāja,
Śakra-Indra
wounded the invincible terror of the gods,
the Dānava Vipracitti,

32 Who had started persecuting the three worlds
with arrogant display of his strength.
Pierced by the shafts
of Nīla,

33 Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman bled profusely,
but angrily steeled himself,
and brandishing his bow
whose twang was like that of Indra's thunderbolt,

34 The quick-thinking hero decided
to annihilate Nīla.
With six dazzling broad-headed, gold-worked
bhalla-arrows,

35 Aśvatthāman killed the four horses of Nīla
and shredded his flag.
His seventh arrow struck Nīla
in the chest.

36 Grievously hurt,
Nīla squatted inside his chariot.
Seeing blue-skinned rājā Nīla bewildered
and helpless,

37 Ghaṭotkaca worked himself up into a fury
and plunged into battle
against that resplendent hero
Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman.

38 His hard-to-defeat-in-battle
companion rākṣasas rushed to fight also.
Seeing the gruesome rākṣasas
approaching,

39 The radiant son of Bharadvāja, Droṇa,
instantly fired a volley of arrows
which eliminated
many of them

40 Who happened to be in front of Ghatoṭkaca.
Noticing his soldiers
unwilling to face the ferocity
by Droṇa,

41 Mahā-bodied Ghaṭotkaca, Bhīma's son,
in livid fury
produced a grisly and awesome display
of māyā,

42 Which completely confounded Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman;
so one by one your soldiers succumbed
to the māyā.

43 Your soldiers imagined themselves littered
on the field,
mangled, mutilated, writhing in pools
of their own blood,

44 Droṇa, Duryodhana, Śalya, Aśvatthāman
And other Kaurava mahā-archers fleeing from the
battlefield,

45 Chariot-heroes crumpled, rājās butchered,
Horses and riders chopped in thousands.

46 They imagined all this, and frantically ran back
to their camps,
though I and Devavrata-Bhīṣma kept shouting
at them, O rājā:

47 "It's all a māyā created by the rākṣasas!
Keep fighting!"
They were in a state of total panic,
they did not stop,

48 They would not believe us,
so terror-stricken were they.
Seeing them scatter, the Pāṇḍavas celebrated
their victory

49 By shouting leonine war-cries,
the loudest being Ghaṭotkaca himself.
The war-cries blended with blaring conches
and thudding *dundubhi*-drums.

50 And that is how your army was routed
by the ill-minded son of Hiḍimbā
and scattered
just before sunset.

SECTION NINETY-FIVE

1 Foe-crushing rājā Duryodhana
refused to believe
a rākṣasa had routed his soldiers
in battle.
He approached Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma
and respectfully

2 Reported all that had taken place –
the victory of Ghaṭotkaca,
and his own humiliation
(continued Sañjaya).

3 The hard-to-defeat hero sighed repeatedly
as he recounted the details,
O rājā, and said to the Kaurava
Pitāmaha Bhīṣma:

4 "Vāsudeva-Krishna is the strength of the Pāṇḍavas.
Prabhu! Lord!
So are you ours – or why would I have begun
this fearful war?

5 I have eleven *akṣauhiṇīs* of soldiers
under my command,
and they and I are all yours to command,
O foe-crusher.

6 And yet, O tiger-brave Bharata,
I am defeated
by the Pāṇḍavas, led by Bhīma
and Ghaṭotkaca!

7 This flames through me like fire consuming
a withered tree.
O mahā-fortune-favoured foe-slayer,
I seek your grace.

8 Pitāmaha! Grant that I annihilate
    that atrocious rākṣasa today –
with your help. Grant that this wish
    is fulfilled."

9 O unexcelled Bharata! To this request of the rājā,
    Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
said to Duryodhana
    these words:

10 "O foe-chastiser, O rājā, O Kaurava,
    listen to my advice
about how the strategy
    has to be worked out, mahārāja.

11 *Tāta*! My child! O foe-destroyer!
    O defectless one!
Your safety is paramount. You should fight only
    Dharmārāja Yudhiṣṭhira

12 Or Arjuna, or Bhīma, or even the twins
    Nakula and Sahadeva.
A rājā's dharma
    is to oppose rājās.

13 You must not stoop to fight Haiḍimbā-Ghaṭotkaca.
I, Droṇa, Kṛpa, Aśvatthāman, Kṛtavarman,
Śalya, Bhūriśravas, the mahā-chariot-hero Vikarṇa,

14 Duḥśāsana and your other excellent brothers –
We will fight the mahā-powerful-rākṣasa

15 Or, since you are so bitterly opposed
To that Indra-among-rākṣasas Ghaṭotkaca,
Allow this warrior to battle that ill-minded enemy –

16 The earth-lord Bhagadatta,
Who is the equal of Purandara-Indra in war."
Saying this to the rājā, to Bhagadatta

17 Eloquent Bhīṣma said in the presence
    of Indra-among-rulers Duryodhana:
"Go, mahārāja, and challenge the battle-brilliant son
    of Hiḍimbā!

18 Fight the barbarous one with all your strength
in front of all these bowmen,
as Indra fought Tāraka
in the distant past.

19 You possess divine weapons,
and your strength is superhuman.
You have previous experience of fighting even gods,
O foe-destroyer.

20 O tiger-brave king! In this mahā-war, O rājā,
you are a perfect match for Ghaṭotkaca,
and you singly can kill
that bull-brave rākṣasa."

21 Acting on the advice of Bhīṣma
the Kaurava commander,
Bhagadatta roared his war-cry
and rushed at his enemy.

22 He advanced like a huge storm-cloud,
and the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes
angrily prepared
to repulse him.

23 O Bharata! Bhīma, Abhimanyu, the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,
The twins Nakula and Sahadeva, Satyadhṛti,
Kṣatradeva,

24 The Cedi ruler Dhṛṣṭaketu, Vasudāna, the Daśāṃa
ruler –
These attacked Bhagadatta on his elephant Supratīka.

25 A horrific encounter took place
between the Pāṇḍavas
and Bhagadatta's soldiers,
increasing the population of Yama's realm.

26 Mahārāja, showers of sleek arrows
from the ranks of the chariot-heroes
sped towards the elephants
and chariots.

27 Massive elephants,
with lacerated and bleeding temples,
goaded by their riders,
brutally gored other elephants.

28 Maddened by temple-streaming rutting juices,
they slashed each other's flesh
with tusks that resembled
sharp clubs.

29 Horses with long, graceful tails,
spurred by spear-wielding riders,
dashed blindly head-on
against other horses.

30 Foot-soldiers, struck by spears and *śakti*-missiles,
wounded, collapsed on the ground
in hundreds and thousands
upon thousands.

31 O rājā! After slaughtering innumerable heroes
with barbed arrows, *karṇi*-pipe-guns and darts,
chariot-heroes screamed
their war-cries.

32 In the thick of that horripilating
dreadful battle,
the maha-brilliant bowman Bhagadatta
attacked Bhīma

33 From atop his magnificent elephant,
whose temples streamed
with seven rutting juice-lines
like so many rivers running downhill.

34 From the back of Supratīka,
the spotless hero Bhagadatta,
like Maghavat-Indra on Airāvata,
fired thousands of arrows.

35 He pounded Bhīma
with the deluge of shafts,
like summer-end clouds
thrashing a hill with rain.

36 Infuriated Bhīma with a volley of arrows
succeeded in killing
over a hundred soldiers protecting
the elephant's legs.

37 Bhagadatta witnessed their deaths and,
angrily goading his Indra-lordly elephant,
he charged straight
at Bhīma's chariot.

38 Like an arrow fired straight and swift,
Bhagadatta's elephant,
guided by his rider, thundered towards
Bhīma's chariot.

39 Seeing the elephant bearing down inexorably
on them,
the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes collectively
attacked it.

40 O honour-bestowing monarch!
The five Kekaya brothers, Abhimanyu, Draupadī's
sons,
The ruler of the Darśārṇas, heroic Kṣatradeva,

41 The Cedi ruler, Citraketu – these agitated warriors,
All mahā-powerful, brandished their divine weapons,

42 And surrounded brave Bhagadatta's elephant.
Lacerated
by innumerable arrows fired by them,
and bleeding profusely,

43 He looked like a stream-washed
red-chalk mountain.
The Dasārṇa ruler,
riding a hill-huge elephant,

44 Charged his beast straight towards
Bhagadatta.
Seeing the giant beast advancing swiftly,
the excellent elephant

45 Supratīka stood firm,
like ocean-shore against ocean-breakers.
Seeing the mahātmā Daśārṇa ruler's advance
thus frustrated,

46 The Pāṇḍava heroes, awe-struck, exclaimed,
"*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*! Excellent! Excellent!"
The Prāgjyotiṣa ruler
with fourteen lances

47 Harassed the elephant of the Daśārṇa-chief;
shredding
the exquisite armour and gold-work
on its body.

48 They penetrated its skin like snakes slithering
inside an ant-hill
O excellent Bharata! Grievously wounded,
weakened, and in pain,

49 Its mad fury diminished,
the elephant swerved suddenly
and trumpeting shrill cries
of agony,

50 Trampled its own Pāṇḍava soldiers,
like a gale uprooting trees.
The mahā-chariot-heroes
of the Pāṇḍavas,

51 Undismayed, shouting their fierce leonine war-cries,
advanced for battle.
Under the leadership of Bhīma,
they attacked Bhagadatta,

52 O rājā, firing a varied collection of weapons
and missiles.
Infuriated and vengeance-seeking warriors,
they screamed

53 Their war-cries, which the mahā-bowman
Bhagadatta heard;
further provoked, he goaded his elephant
to fresh attack.

54 That marvellous elephant,
goaded by toe-spur and hand-hook,
was like the consuming fires
of Samvartaka doomsday.

55 Careening across the field of battle,
the elephant
crushed chariots, elephants,
indeed hundrds of elephants.

56 It trampled and killed
hundreds and thousands of foot-soldiers.
Alarmed, the mahā-army
of the Pāṇḍavas,

57 Mahārāja, shrivelled, like a leather hide
in a blazing fire.
Seeing his army scattered
by noble-minded Bhagadatta,

58 Ghaṭotkaca, in a fit of fury,
assumed a horrendous shape;
his eyes and face burning with rage,
he rushed, O rājā,

59 With fiery speed at Bhagadatta,
brandishing a dazzling *śula*-trident
with the power
to shatter hills.

60 Determined to waste the elephant,
brave Ghaṭotkaca
flung the trident
that radiated fearful arrow-sparks.

61 Observing the speeding trident
menacingly advancing,
Bhagadatta countered with a sharp, blinding,
crescent-shaped arrow,

62 Which collided with the trident,
slicing it neatly in two,
both halves crashing in flames
on the ground,

63 Like Indra's mahā-thunderbolts
hurled from the skies.
Seeing his trident smashed and scattered
on the field,

64 Bhagadatta selected a gold-staffed mahā-spear
the dazzled like fire,
and hurled it at Ghaṭotkaca,
shouting, "Stop!"

65 As it sped through the air
like a fearful thunderbolt,
Ghaṭotkaca screamed, leapt up,
and caught it firmly.

66 Even as the Indra-of-earth-rulers Bhagadatta
watched, astounded,
he smashed it across his thigh.
An incredible feat!

67 Even the gods, gandharvas, and munis
were awe-struck
at this unbelievable performance
of the super-powerful rākṣasa.

68 Mahārāja, the Pāṇḍavas, led by Bhīma,
burst suddenly
into loud shouts of *"Sādhu! Sādhu!*
Excellent! Excellent!"

69 The mahā-acclamations of the mahātmā-Pāṇḍavas
roused Bhagadatta
to another pitch of fierce,
uncontrollable fury.

70 Stretching his Indra-thunderbolt mahā-bow
to its fullest,
he attacked the Pāṇḍava
mahā-chariot-heroes,

71 Firing volley after volley
of sharp and fiery arrows.
He wounded Bhīma with one,
Ghaṭotkaca with nine,

72 Abhimanyu with three,
the Kekaya princes with five.
Then, with a knotted shaft
fired at full bow-stretch,

73 He pierced the right shoulder of Kṣatradeva,
whose arrow-fixed bow fell
as his grip loosened
on his excellent weapon.

74 With five arrows he harassed
the five sons of Draupadī,
and in fiery fury he killed
the horses of Bhīma.

75 With three arrows he shredded
Bhīma's lion-emblemed banner,
and with three winged arrows wounded
Bhīma's charioteer

76 Viśoka who, grievously hurt
by Bhagadatta's fierce attack,
slumped in a faint, O excellent Bharata,
inside the vehicle.

77 Deprived of his chariot, mahā-muscled Bhīma,
finest of chariot-heroes,
leapt out of his shattered vehicle,
brandishing his mace.

78 He looked, with his high uplifted mace,
like a towering mountain,
and your soldiers were filled
with grave fear.

79 It was at this moment that Arjuna,
with Krishna as his charioteer,
drove in, destroying his foes,
mahārāja,

80 And reached the spot where the mahā-chariot-heroes,
Bhīma and Ghaṭotkaca,
father and son, tiger-brave warriors,
were battling Bhagadata of Prāgjyotiṣa.

81 Seeing his maha-chariot-hero brothers,
O unexcelled Bharata,
Arjuna plunged in and fired his arrows
on all sides.

82 The mahā-chariot-hero rājā Duryodhana hurriedly
ordered his army
of countless soldiers, cavalry, and elephant-warriors
to attack.

83 The white-horsed chariot of Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
sped straight
into the ranks of the advancing
Kaurava forces.

84 In that skirmish, Bhagadatta routed
the Pāṇḍava soldiers
with his elephant, and then concentrated
on Yudhiṣṭhira.

85 A mahā-gory battle took place, O gracious monarch,
between the Pāñcālas,
Sṛñjayas, Kekayas armed with remarkable weapons,
and Bhagadatta.

86 It was during the course of this battle
that Bhīma
reported to Keśava-Krishna and Arjuna
the death of Irāvat.

SECTION NINETY-SIX

1 Hearing about the death of his son Irāvat
(continued Sṛñjaya)
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, sunk in mahā-grief, sighing deeply
like a Pannaga-snake,

2 O rājā, said to Vasudeva's son Krishna
on the battlefield:
"Vastly-wise Vidura knew
this was going to happen,

3 Which is why mahā-minded Vidura warned
lord-of-men-Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
He foreknew the mutual annihilation
of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas.

4 This has been a heinous war, Madhusūdana-Krishna.
We and they
have slaughtered so many heroes
in this great clash.

5 And all for the sake of wealth, O finest of men!
We have killed for property!
Dhik! Shame on the wealth that comes
from killing kinsmen!

6 Better to die poor than get rich
by killing kinsmen.
What can we gain, Krishna,
by senselessly slaughtering kinsmen?

7 The faults of Duryodhana and Saubala-Śakuni
and the wrong advice of Karṇa
have created this calamity
for Kṣatriyas.

8 O mahā muscled Madhusūdana-Krishna!
Now I realise how noble it was
of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira to approach and ask
Suyodhana-Duryodhana

9 For just five villages,
if parting with half the kingdom
was not feasible – a request
ill-minded Duryodhana turned down.
Seeing these brave Kṣatriyas lying dead
on the battlefield,

10 I blame myself.
Dhik! Shame on the life of a Kṣatriya!
For a Kṣatriya to say this
may brand me a weakling,

11 But this killing of my kinsmen
is not to my liking.
Still, drive my chariot, Madhusūdana-Krishna,
to the Kaurava army.

12 I can cross this uncrossable ocean
by sheer strength.
Mādhava-Krishna! This is not the time
for useless talk."

13 On Pārtha-Arjuna's request, Keśava-Krishna,
crusher of brave heroes,
drove his white wind-swift horses
to the battlefield.

14 O Bharata! The roaring of your troops
was like the ocean
whipped by winds
on the new moon or full moon.

15 In the afternoon, mahārāja, the clash
between Bhīṣma and the Pāṇḍavas
reverberated
like thunder of rain-clouds.

16 Then it was that your sons, ringing Droṇa
like the Vasu-gods surrounding Vāsava-Indra,
launched an attack
on Bhīmasena.

17 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma, the excellent chariot-hero Kṛpa,
Bhagadatta and Suśarmā together attacked
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

18 Hṛdīka's son Kṛtavarman and Bāhlīka attacked
Sātyaki,
King Ambaṣṭhaka attacked Abhimanyu.

19 The other warriors, mahārāja, attacked
the mahā-chariot heroes.
A carnage of horrendous proportions resulted.

20 O lord of men! Seeing your sons plunge into battle,
Bhīma burst into anger
like the sacred fire blazing
with ghee.

21 Your sons smothered Kuntī's son Bhīma
with arrows, mahārāja,
that fell like torrents of rain on hills
in the monsoon.

22 Harassed by that heavy arrowy downpour,
O lord of the earth,
tiger-proud Bhīma licked the corners of his mouth
in furious anger.

23 He attacked your son Vyūḍhoraska
with a sharp arrow
and killed him
with that horse-shoe-headed shaft.

24 With a stone-sharpened, finely-polished,
broad-head arrow,
he killed Kuṇḍalin
as a lion kills a cub-deer.

25 Fitting polished and finely-sharpened arrows,
O gracious monarch,
he shot them accurately at close range
at your sons.

26 Fired skilfully by the excellent bowman,
they struck with such impact
that the mahā-chariot heroes
were knocked down:

27 Anādhṛṣṭi, Kuṇḍabhedi, Vairāṭa, Dīrghalocana,
Dīrghabāhu, Subāhu, and Kanakadhvaja.

28 They fell as gracefully and beautifully
as sprigs of mango-blossom,
O bull-brave Bharata, snapping and drifting
in springtime.

29 Imagining mahā-powerful Bhīma
to be Kāla the All-Destroyer
in that mahā-battle, the rest of your soldiers
fled from the field.

30 Droṇa came forward and deluged Bhīma,
who was harassing your sons,
with arrows that descended like rain
on a mountain.

31 We saw Kuntī's son Bhīma perform
a breathtaking feat then,
for though oppressed by Droṇa,
he continued attacking your sons.

32 Like a huge bull receiving heavy rain
on his hump,
Bhīma fearlessly absorbed the arrow-downpour
of your sons.

33 Mahārāja, it was splendid the way
wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
simultaneously bore the assault of Droṇa
and killed your sons.

34 Arjuna's elder brother, mahā-powerful Bhīma,
played with your heroic sons
as a lion plays with a herd of deer,
mahārāja.

35 Wolf-waisted Bhīma frightened and mauled
your sons
like a wolf-terrifying a herd of cattle
from within the fold.

36 Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma, Bhagadatta, Kṛpa –
these three mahā-chariot-heroes –
All concentrated their attack
on Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna.

37 But the chariot-expert Arjuna repulsed
their missiles
with this own, and killed many
of their brave followers.

38 Abhimanyu shattered the chariot
of the finest of chariot-heroes,
world-renowned rājā Ambaṣṭhaka,
with his arrows.

39 His chariot smashed, himself wounded
by Subhadrā's illustrious son,
Ambaṣṭhaka leapt off his chariot
and swiftly

40 Flung his sword straight
at the mahātmā son of Subhadrā,
and then quickly climbed into the chariot
of mahā-powerful Kṛtavarman.

41 Hero-annihilator Saubhadra-Abhimanyu,
expert in war-strategy,
swerved and nimbly stepped
out of the sword's path.

42 Seeing Saubhadra-Abhimanyu skilfully escape
the swift-speeding sword,
the soldiers, O lord of the world, shouted:
"*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*! Excellent! Excellent!"

43 Elswhere, the Pāṇḍava warriors
headed by Dhṛṣṭadyumna
clashed with yours; and yours clashed
with the Pāṇḍavas.

44 O Bharata! Bloody skirmishes took place
between the soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas
and the warriors
of rājā Duryodhana.

45 They dragged each other by the hair,
they scratched,
they bit, they boxed and kicked
and tore,

46 Using swords and shoulders and fists.
Taking advantage
of each other's weaknesses, they despatched themselves
to the realm of Yama.

47 Father killed son, and son killed father.
No quarter was given
and no quarter was asked
in that free-for-all battle.

48 Exquisitely beautiful gold-inlaid bows,
slipped from the hands
of dead heroes, and mahā-costly ornaments,
O gracious monarch,

49 Oiled, polished, and sharpened arrows
with gold or silver wings,
like skin-sloughed snakes,
lay on the field,

50 Along with gold-decorated swords
with ivory hilts,
and gold-embossed shields
dropped by dead warriors.

51 Lances and spears and battle-axes,
and *śakti*-missiles
either gold-plated
or decorated with gold-work,

52 Glittering coats of armour, massive clubs,
light and heavy,
parigha-maces, *paṭṭiśa*-swords, small darts,
O gracious monarch,

53 Elegantly-designed caparisons for war-elephants,
yak-tail fans,
many kinds of golden bows,
lay on the field.

54 And the supine chariot-heroes on the field,
though dead,
clutching their weapons,
looked as if they were alive.

55 They lay on the field
with mace-pulped bodies
cudgelled heads
mangled by chariots
trampled by elephants
crushed by horses.

56 O rājā! The battlefield looked like a plain
dotted with hillocks,
with so many corpses of men and horses
and elephants.

57 The field was a litter of arrows, darts, *śaktis*,
Swords, axes, spears, and pipe-guns,

58 Iron crows, hooks, goads, maces, bludgeons,
Fire-spewers, and more, O gracious monarch.

59 A haunting slight – so many heroes,
silent, dead;
some groaning feebly, other writhing
in their blood –

61 So many handsome thighs, O Bharata,
like trunks of elephants,
so many chopped heads, with graceful ear-rings,
of large-bull-eyed soldiers.

62 A haunting sight! The field of battle
glowing everywhere
with softly-flaming fires of blood-stained armour
and gold ornaments.

63 Ornaments loosened and slipped
Bows scattered everywhere
Gold-winged arrows on the field –

64 Smashed chariots decorated
with rows of tinkling bells
Dead horses
tongues lolling
bespattered with blood –

65 Chariot-frames
Pennants and flags
Quivers
Milk-white conches
of brave warriors –

66 Trunk-chopped elephants
all over the field –
A haunting sight!
– the earth like a lovely girl
adorned with multiple jewels.

67 Lance-gored elephants
trumpeting in agony of death-throes
again and again –

68 A haunting sight! The field looked
as if billowing
with undulating hills.
Coloured blankets and trappings,

69 Elegant hooks
with *vaidūrya lapis lazuli* handles
Elephant bells scattered in profusion
O Indra-among-rājās –

70 Superbly-crafted howdahs
with skins of *raṅku*-deer
golden girdles
glittering necklaces –

71 Pulverised weapons
gold-plated darts
gold-ordered breast-plates of horses
dirtied with mud –

72 Severed limbs of horse-soldiers
shining with bracelets –
polished *prāsa*-spears
dazzling *ṛṣṭi*-swords –

73 Gorgeous head-gear
rolling on the ground –
excellent crescent arrows
of incredible lustre–

74 Horse-caparisons
and skins of *raṅku*-deer
shredded as well as solid –
Breathtaking mahā-expensive jewels
in royal head-gear of Indra-like heroes –

75 Umbrellas and yak-tail fans
chaotically scattered –
moon-like and lotus-like
faces of soldiers
radiant with earrings –

76 O mahārāja
Handsome faces
with well-trimmed beards
and golden *kuṇḍalas*
and other ornaments –

77 The earth looked like the sky
scintillating with stars
and planets.
O Bharata! In this way the two mahā-armies
clashed and multilated

78 Each other in horrendous battle.
Crushed and exhausted and shattered,
O Bharata descendant, they retired

79 When dark night covered the earth
and nothing was visible.
Then the armies of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
returned to their camps.

80 Grim-faced, dark-minded, mahā-fear-filled,
  the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas
retired for the night to the safety
  of their respective camps.

SECTION NINETY-SEVEN

1 Rājā Duryodhana, Subala's son Śakuni.
  (continued Sañjaya)
your son Duḥśāsana,
  and the Sūta's undefeatable son Karṇa,

2 Mahārāja, held a conference on how best
  the sons of Pāṇḍu and their followers
could be overcome
  on the battlefield.

3 After discussing the situation with Karṇa
  and mahā-powerful Śakuni,
rājā Duryodhana turned to his advisers
  and said:

4 "I do not know why, but neither
  Droṇa, Kṛpa,
Śalya, nor Bhūriśravas is a match
  for Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons.

5 Unharmed, the Pāṇḍavas daily devastate
  my soldiers.
Karṇa! My army is weakening,
  my armoury is getting exhausted.

6 You, Rādheya-Karṇa, have so far refrained
  from doing battle.
That is why I am reduced
  to this helpless condition.
In front of my eyes Bhīma killed
  my own brothers.

7 I hardly know what to do.
  Even the gods
cannot defeat the Pāṇḍavas.
  How can I rout them then?"

8 The Sūta's son heard the dilemma
of foe-crushing mahārāja Duryodhana,
and said: "Excellent Bharata, cast off grief.
I will do it.

9 Recall Bhīṣma from the mahā-battlefield.
The instant
Gaṅgā's son lays down his weapons,
O Bharata,

10 I will destroy the Pāṇḍavas and Somakas
before his very-eyes.
I give you my solemn word, O king,
this will be done.

11 Bhīṣma has always been soft
towards the Pāṇḍavas.
Naturally he has not been able to defeat
the mahā-chariot-heroes.

12 Bhīṣma thinks no end of himself
and he loves fighting.
Tāta, my friend, how can he win
if he lets gentleness influence him?

13 Do not delay.
Go this instant to Bhīṣma's tent.
Persuade your guru to lay down his weapons,
O Bharata.

14 And when that is done, watch me, O rājā,
single-handed
destroy the Pāṇḍavas, their kinsmen,
and their allies."

15 Pondering these words of Karṇa,
Duryodhana
suddenly turned to his brother Duḥśāsana
and said:

16 "See to it, Duḥśāsana, that my retinue
is ready.
Make all preparations for my visit.
Do this immediately."

17 O rājā! Having ordered Duḥśāsana,
Duryodhana said to Karṇa:
"I will persuade lord-of-men Bhīṣma
to withdraw from the field.

18 And then I will return to you, O foe-crusher.
Take what steps you will then
for the offensive
you have planned."

19 O lord of the world! Accompanied by his brothers,
Duryodhana strode out,
like Śatakratu-Indra surrounded by his host
of celestial followers.

20 Duḥśāsana helped tiger-among-kings Duryodhana,
whose glory
was the equal of a tiger's,
to mount his horse.

21 Mahārāja! With his diadem and glittering bracelets,
and other ornaments,
your son Duryodhana dazzled
as he rode to meet Bhīṣma,

22 With *bhaṇḍi*-flowers
and fragrant saṇḍal-paste
golden-saffron in colour, smeared, O king,
on his handsome body.

23 He wore spotless garments,
and rode with the confidence of a lion;
he shone like radiant Divākara,
the day-making sun.

24 As the excellent hero Duryodhana proceeded
towards Bhīṣma,
hundreds of world-renowned mahā-bowmen
accompanied him,

25 O Bharata, just as Indra is always accompanied
by the lesser gods.
Some followed on horses,
others on huge elephants,

26 And others in chariots;
finest-of-men Duryodhana was surrounded
by a host of splendidly-armed guards
and well-wishers,

27 Just as Śakra-Indra is protected
by the hosts of celestials.
In this manner, the pūjā-respect-deserving,
mahā-powerful Kaurava

28 Rājā went to the tent of illustrious Bhīṣma,
son of Gaṅgā,
followed by all his retinue
and excellent brothers.

29 He rode, lifting his right arm
as powerful as
an elephant's trunk,
and capable of crushing foes,

30 Dignifiedly accepting the sweet homage
that poured in from all sides
by folding his palms
in *añjali.*

31 The bards of different lands
lauded his mahā-glory
and the citizens pūjā-respected him
as the all-worlds-ruler Sarvalokeśvareśvara.
Rājā Duryodhana was surrounded
by hosts of soldiers.

32 Acknowledging the tributes,
the rājā rode to meet Bhīṣma.
Many honoured mahārāja Duryodhana
with golden lamps.

33 Surrounded by all those golden lamps,
rājā Duryodhana
gleamed like the moon ringed
by shining mahā-planets.

34 Servants with golden turbans,
carrying canes and scent-sprinklers,
cleared the road to make way
for the king.

35 Slowly the royal procession reached
Bhīṣma's tent;
alighting from his horse, lord-of-men
Duryodhana approached Bhīṣma.

36 He honoured Bhīṣma, and sat down
on a magnificent,
golden, finely-carved seat
called the Sarvatobhadra.

37 His palms folded in *añjali,*
his voice tremulous,
his eyes wet with tears, he said,
"Foe-slayer, we can rely on you

38 For victory over Indra and his gods
and over anti-gods,
let alone the Pāṇḍavas and their kinsmen
and supporters.

39 Please show some concern for us, *prabhu*-lord!
O Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma,
destroy the Pāṇḍavas as Mahendra-Indra destroyed
the Dānava-antigods!

40 'Mahārāja, I shall kill the Somakas,
the Pāñcālas,
the Kekayas and the Karūṣas –
all of them!' O Bharata,

41 This was your promise to us.
Make it come true!
O Bharata! Kill Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
and the mahā-bowmen Somakas!

42 But if you feel for the Pāṇḍavas,
prabhu-lord,
and hate me, then let that be my sad fate,
O rājā.

43 But allow, at least, the radiant hero Karṇa
to fight,
and he will rout Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
and their followers."

44 Saying this, your royal son
Duryodhana kept silent –
he said nothing else
to truly valiant Bhīṣma.

SECTION NINETY-EIGHT

1 Mahā-minded Bhīṣma, though mahā-upset
by the dagger-like words of your son,
said nothing unpleasing
in reply.

2 He sighed heavily,
the dagger-like words pained him;
then, after some time,
with anger and sorrow,

3 O Bharata, he lifted his eyes
as if he could consume gods,
gandharvas, and anti-gods;
then, wisest-of-the-wise Bhīṣma

4 In a calm voice said to Duryodhana,
your son:
"Why do you say these dagger-like words,
Duryodhana?

5 Why to me, who have always striven
for your welfare,
and am ready to lay down my life
for your good?

6 Do you not have have sufficient proof
of Pāṇḍava Arjuna's invincibility
in the fact that he defeated Śakra-Indra
and gratified Agni in Khāṇḍava?

7 Was it not sufficient proof, O mahā-muscled hero,
that Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
freed you after you were captured
by the gandharvas?

8 For at that time all your brave brothers fled,
did they not, *prabhu*-lord,
and among them was Rādheya-Karna,
the son of a Sūta.

9 Can you not recall the occasion when,
in the kingdom of Virāṭa,
Arjuna singlehanded dared
to attack us all?

10 Is it not proof enough that,
after defeating enraged Droṇa
and me in battle,
he stripped us of our dresses?

11 Is it not proof enough that he routed
the mahā-bowmen
Aśvatthāman and Kṛpa
when they were rustling Virāṭa's cattle?

12 Is it not proof enough that he humbled
always arrogant Karṇa
by snatching his robes and giving them
to Uttara?

13 Is it not proof enough of Pārtha-Arjuna's strength
that he routed the Nivātakavacas
whom even Vāsava-Indra
could not humble?

14 Which man has power to harm Pāṇḍava Arjuna
who is protected
by the world-protecting wielder of *cakra*,
mace and conch?

15 Of infinite śakti is Vāsudeva-Krishna
Sole Creator and Destroyer
Sarveśvara Lord of all
Deva-deva God of gods
Eternal Paramātmā!

16 In many ways have Nārada and the mahā-ṛṣis,
O rājā Suyodhana-Duryodhana,
praised Krishna. But you do not know what to do,
you are confused.

17 A man on the point of death
mistakes trees for gold.
You see everything topsy-turvy,
son of Gāndhārī.

18 You sowed mahā-hate between yourself
and the Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas.
Be a man now.
Face them, fight them!
The Pāṇḍavas cannot be defeated
even by the gods led by Vāsava-Indra.

19 As for me, O tiger-among-men,
I promise to kill
the Somakas and Pāñcālas,
with one exception – Śikhaṇḍin.

20 Either I shall kill them,
and bring you delight;
or they will kill me,
and I enter the realm of Yama.

21 Śikhaṇḍin was born woman in Drupada's palace;
a boon
made him change sex;
but to me he remains woman.

22 I will lose my life if need be, O Bharata,
but not kill him.
The Creator made him woman,
to me he remains woman.

23 Sleep peacefully, son of Gāndhārī!
Tomorrow will be the mahā-battle,
remembered for as long
as the world lasts."

24 He finished, O lord of men;
your son lowered his head
at the feet of his guru,
and returned to his own tent.

25 Immediately, the foe-crushing rājā
ordered his followers to retire,
and he lay down
for the night.

26 Duryodhana passed the night peacefully.
At dawn,
as soon as the sun rose, O earth-lord,
king Duryodhana

27 Ordered his rājās: "Prepare for battle!
Enraged Bhīṣma
has promised to destroy the Somakas
on the field."

28 O rājā! The harsh complaint of Duryodhana
the previous night
seemed to Bhīṣma to be a reflection
on his military ability,

29 For which reason Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
was depressed.
He regretted his dependence;
then he prepared to fight Arjuna.

30 *What must be going on in Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma's mind?*
wondered Duryodhana.
He pondered deeply, mahārāja,
and ordered Duḥśāsana:

31 "Duḥśāsana, let us deploy our chariots
for Bhīṣma's protection.
Order your twentytwo divisions
to battle stations.

32 What we have wanted these many years –
destruction of the Pāṇḍavas,
possession of the kingdom –
will be realised today.

33 Our main task today
is the protection of Bhīṣma.
Protected by us, helped by us,
he will rout the Pāṇḍavas.

34 The pure-ātmaned hero Bhīṣma told me,
'I will not kill Śikhaṇḍin,
who was born woman, O rājā,
so I will spare him.

35 The world knows, O mahā-muscled one,
that to please my father
I gave up my kingdom
and the company of women.

36 I have vowed never to harm a woman
in battle –
or anyone born woman.
O finest of men! This is the truth.

37 Before the war began I told you, O rājā –
you knew it already –
that Śikhaṇḍin was born woman,
as Śikhaṇḍinī.

38 Born woman, she underwent a sex-change
and became man.
If this he-woman fights,
I refuse to fight back.

39 But all other Kṣatriyas who oppose me
on the field today,
eager to defeat me, *tāta*, dear one,
I will kill.'

40 That is what the learned-in-sāstras
Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma told me.
Our first duty, O excellent Bharata Duḥśāsana,
is to protect him.

41 An unprotected lion in a mahā-forest,
if left unprotected,
can fall prey to a wolf.
Śikhaṇḍin must not kill Bhīṣma!

42 Our maternal uncle Śakuni,
with the help of Śalya,
Droṇa, and Viviṁśati will protect Bhīṣma,
and assure our victory."

43 Acting on Duryodhana's instructions,
all the warriors
manoeuvred their chariots to surround
Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma.

44 Protectively ringing Bhīṣma,
your sons marched to battle.
The earth trembled, and commotion struck
the Pāṇḍavas.

45 The Kaurava mahā-chariot-heroes,
dressed in armour,
with chariots and elephants
kept watch on Bhīṣma.

46 Protecting the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma,
they looked like the gods
protecting thunder-wielding Indra
in the war with the anti-gods.

47 Rājā Duryodhāna turned to his brothers and repeated:
"Yudhāmanyu protects Arjuna's left wheel,
Uttamaujas his right.

48 Himself protected thus, Arjuna protects Śikhaṇḍin.
Duḥśāsana, make arrangements so that Śikhaṇḍin

49 Will never be able to find Bhīṣma unprotected by us."
Acting on the orders of his brother, your son
Duḥśāsana

50 Placed Bhīṣma at the head of the army,
and proceeded to battle.
Seeing Bhīṣma ringed
by protective chariots,

51 The excellent chariot-hero Arjuna
said to Dhṛṣṭadyumna:
"Prince of Pāñcāla,
order tiger-among-men Śikhaṇḍin
to march against Bhīṣma.
I will protect Śikhaṇḍin"

SECTION NINETY-NINE

1 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
advanced with his soldiers
(continued Sañjaya) in the mahā-battle array
Sarvotabhadra.

2 Kṛpa, Kṛtavarman, the mahā-chariot-hero Śaibya,
Śakuni, the Sindhu ruler, the Kāmboja-ruler Śudakṣiṇa

3 Were those who accompanied Bhīṣma and,
with your sons,
led the army, forming the Kaurava-spearhead,
O Bharata descendant.

4 Droṇa, Bhūriśravas, Śalya, Bhagadatta,
Dressed in armour, protected the right wing.

5 Aśvatthāman, Somadatta, the mahā-chariot-hero
Avanti princes,
With a huge army protected the left wing.

6 Rājā Duryodhana, mahārāja,
surrounded by the Trigartas,
was situated in the centre, facing the Pāṇḍavas,
O Bharata rājā.

7 The excellent chariot-hero Alambuṣa
and the mahā-chariot-hero Śrutāyus,
dressed in armour,
made up the army's rear.

8 Your soldiers, stationed in their ranks,
O Bharata,
were a massive striking force,
which looked like a huge fire.

9 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira and Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma,
The twin sons of Mādrī, Nakula and Sahadeva,

10 Dressed in armour, stood at their army's head.
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa, the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,

11 Stood ready with their foe-destroying divisions.
Śikhaṇḍin, Arjuna, the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,

12 Mahā-muscled Cekitāna, valiant Kuntibhoja,
Stood ready for battle with their hosts of soldiers.

13 The brave bowman Abhimanyu, mahā-powerful
Drupada,
Stood ready for battle with their hosts of soldiers.

14 The Kekaya brothers, all in armour, stood prepared.
Such was the tremendous, invincible army formation

15 Of the Pāṇḍavas, all armour-encased, all alert.
Your soldiers, O lord of men, supported by huge divisions,

16 Led by Bhīṣma, began the assault on the Pāṇḍavas, O king,
And the Pāṇḍavas counter-attacked, led by Bhīma, O rājā.

17 Eager to win a decisive victory,
shouting fierce war-cries,
with tumultuous roaring and blowing
of conches and cow-horns,

18 With trumpetings of elephants
and a cacophony of yells,
they rushed to attack
the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

19 With *mṛdaṅga*-drums, and cymbals, and conches, and *dundubhis*,
with lusty war-cries, our soldiers also
marched to attack,

20 In a fury of rage. Roars from one side
were countered
with roars from the other.
A mahā-calamitous battle,

21 In which soldiers fell blindly
on each other,
tottering and dying. The earth shuddered
at the mahā-horrors.

22 Birds wheeled up in the sky,
hovering and shrieking.
The splendid risen sun paled
and dimmed.

23 Fearful winds of ill omen started blowing,
thunder rumbled suddenly;
inauspicious jackals roamed in packs,
screaming weirdly,

24 Their presence portending a mahā-massacre,
mahārāja.
The points of the heavens blazed
without warning, O rājā,

25 And stones began pelting from the sky,
along with bones
sticky with marrow and copious clots of blood.
Warriors wept involuntarily.

26 The animals on the battlefield wallowed
in their own urine and dung;
O bull-brave Bharata lord of the world!
With mahā-horrendous yells,

27 Gruesome man-eating rākṣasas drowned
the war-cries
of the battling warriors.
Jackals, vultures, and crows screamed.

28 Dogs barked in strange ways,
O gracious monarch.
Massive meteors seemed to shoot
into the sun
and then fall on earth –
portending mahā-disasters.

29 The splendid arrays
of Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas
trembled and wavered
like storm-tossed trees,
in the noise of the conches
and the din of the drums.

30 The tumultuous din
of the teeming armies
that clashed inauspiciously
resembled the roaring
of waves when an ocean
is lashed by a tempest.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED

1 Energetic Abhimanyu,
in his chariot of russet horses
(continued Sañjaya), charged at the massive army
of Duryodhana,

2 Firing volleys of arrows
like clouds discharging rain.
Inflamed with anger, foe-crushing Abhimanyu
entered the field of battle,

3 As easily as Hari-Viṣṇu in his Boar-incarnation
entered the mahā-ocean,
penetrating the Kaurava-waters
with his weapons.
None of your soldiers, O Kaurava descendant,
could check him.

4 His foe-annihilating arrows, ceaselessly released,
O rājā,
sent many excellent Kṣatriya heroes
to the realm of the rājā of the spirits.

5 Livid with anger, the son of Subhadrā
fired flaming arrows
that sped like Yama's rod
or like venomous snakes.

6 Phālguna-Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
disintegrated chariots
and chariot-riders as well as elephants
and elephant-riders.

7 It was such a mahā-brilliant display –
all the kings
on the field respectfully applauded
Phālguni-Abhimanyu.

8 Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu treated your soldiers
as a tempest treats
a heap of cotton, flinging it in the sky,
O Bharata descendant.

9 O Bharata! Harassed by him, your soldiers,
like elephants stuck in a swamp,
were unable to find
any succour.

10 Abhimanyu sliced through your ranks,
O most excellent of men,
and stood on the field, O rājā,
like a smokeless conflagration.

11 Like insects propelled by Kāla
into a fatal fire,
your soldiers were pulled, O rājā,
into the Abhimanyu-blaze.

12 That Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-hero mahā-bowman
smashed all opposition,
as does Vāsava-Indra,
the mighty wielder of the thunderbolt.

13 His gold-worked bow, flashing in all directions,
O rājā,
looked as striking as lightning flashing
in storm-clouds.

14 Smoothly polished and sharpened arrows
sped from his bow, O rājā,
like swarms of bees from a forest-tree
in full bloom.

15 As Subhadrā's mahātmā son traversed
the battlefield
in his golden chariot, none could detect
any inadequacy in him.

16 Baffling Kṛpa, Droṇa, Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman,
and Bṛhadbala and Jayadratha,
he gracefully and powerfully
dominated the field.

17 As he wrought havoc in your army, O Bharata,
I saw him pull his bow full circle,
like the maṇḍala
of the sun.

18 Seeing him harass them with such superb,
effortless ease,
the Kṣatriya heroes thought the world contained
two Phālguna-Arjunas.

19 Reeling under his attack,
the massive army of Duryodhana
teetered like a woman
under the influence of wine.

20 Routing the soldiers and demoralising
the mahā-chariot-heroes,
he delighted his men
like Vāsava-Indra after killing Maya.

21 Under his relentless onslaught,
your soldiers burst into loud groans,
like rumbling clouds
in the monsoon.

22 Hearing their wails of distress and agony,
O Bharata,
sounding like a storm-tossed ocean roaring
on a full moon night,

23 Your son Duryodhana, O rājā,
said to Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's son Alambuṣa:
"O mahā-muscled hero,
Phālguna-Arjuna, like a second Krishna,

24 Is mutilating my army like Vṛtra mutilating
the army of the gods.
I know of no mahā-medicine for him
in battle

25 Except you, O most excellent rākṣasa!
You are all-wise.
Go, challenge Subhadrā's son on the field,
and kill him.

26 Our tactic will be to destroy Pārtha-Arjuna
with the help
of Bhīṣma and Droṇa."
The powerful Indra-among-rākṣasas

27 Followed your son's orders
and entered the thick of battle
with horrendous, mahā-deafening cries
like thunder-clouds.

28 Such mahā-horrific screams, O rājā,
that the mahā-army of the Pāṇḍavas
shuddered,
like ocean-waves lashed by a tempest.

29 Many, mahāraja, heard the roars
and in terror
collapsed and fell on the ground,
dead.

30 Exultant Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu,
holding a bow with arrow fixed,
seemed to dance in his chariot
as he attacked the rākṣasa.

31 Clashing with Ārjuni-Abhimanyu,
the enraged rākṣasa lunged
and smashed the soldiers who happened
to be near him.

32 Wreaking havoc in the mahā-army
of the Pāṇḍavas,
the rākṣasa charged
like Bala attacking the gods.

33 Gracious monarch! A horrible slaughter!
A horrendous carnage among the enemy
When the grisly rākṣasa
Started his trail of butchery!

34 With one thousand arrows that clearly
showed his superior skill,
the rākṣasa routed the mahā-ranks
of the Pāṇḍavas.

35 Decimated by the dreadful rākṣasa,
the warriors of the Pāṇḍavas
fled helter-skelter
in reckless abandon.

36 He trampled on the soldiers
as an elephant tramples lotuses,
and then retaliated
at Draupadī's mahā-powerful sons.

37 Draupadī's sons,
all brilliant foe-crushing mahā-bowmen,
angrily charged at him,
like five planets rushing towards the sun.

38 They clashed. The excellent rākṣasa,
under their ferocious attack,
looked like the moon assailed by five planets
at the end of a yuga.

39 It was then that the great hero Prativindhya
wounded the rākṣasa
with polished arrows
sharp as battle-axes.

40 Shredding his armour,
they stuck in the rākṣasa's body,
which looked like a mahā-cloud
haloed by sun-rays.

41 Pierced, O rājā, with golden-winged arrows
Ṛṣyśṛṅga's son Alambuṣa
looked like a hill
with brilliantly flaming peaks.

42 Firing golden-winged, stone-sharpened arrows,
the five Pāṇḍava brothers
cornered the Indra-among-rākṣasas
in a swift manoeuvre.

43 Those fearful arrows stung like venomous snakes,
O rājā,
and Alambuṣa ran amok
like the leader of an elephant herd.

44 Quickly the mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍavas
attacked again, mahārāja,
and this time the rākṣasa, O gracious monarch,
lost consciousness.

45 Recovering, his fury doubled.
Attacking again, he shredded
the bows, arrows and flags
of his five Pāṇḍava adversaries.

46 As if dancing in his chariot,
the mahā-chariot-hero rākṣasa,
smiling, wounded all the five brothers
with five arrows each.

47 The mahā-powerful rākṣasa
in a burst of rage
killed the horses and charioteers
of the five mahātmā-brothers.

48 Again, in extreme fury,
he wounded them repeatedly
with skilfully-sharpened arrows
fired in hundreds and thousands.

49 Having destroyed their chariots,
the night-prowling rākṣasa
charged at them with the sole purpose
of killing them.

50 Seeing the five brothers afflicted
by the ill-ātmaned rākṣasa,
Arjuna's son Abhimanyu charged
headlong at him.

51 The duel between them resembled
the duel
between Vāsava-Indra and Vṛtra.
All the mahā-chariot-heroes witnessed it.

52 The two mahā-powerful heroes, mahārāja,
their bodies shaking in anger
and eyes red with rage,
clashed in mahā-combat.

53 Both looked like the Kāla-fire
of all-annihilation.
It was a horrendous, all-destroying combat
of heroes,

54 Like that of Śakra-Indra and the anti-god Śambara
In the long-past battle between gods and anti-gods.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-ONE

1 "Sañjaya! How did the rākṣasa Alambuṣa,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra
"fare in his duel with Ārjuni-Abhimanyu
who had routed so many chariot-heroes?

2 And how did Subhadrā's foe-crushing son
Abhimanyu
fare with Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's son?
Tell me everything in detail.

3 How did Dhanañjaya-Arjuna fare in his attacks
on my army?
And Bhīma? And the finest chariot-hero rākṣasa
Ghaṭotkaca?

4 And what about Nakula, Sahadeva, and the mahā-
chariot-hero Sātyaki?
Describe everything in detail, Sañjaya, for you know all."

5 O gracious monarch! (said Sañjaya),
I will describe in full
the horripilating combat between Subhadrā's son
and the rākṣasa;

6 I will describe the valour which Arjuna and Bhīma
And Nakula and Sahadeva displayed on the field;

7 I will describe how your soldiers, led by Bhīṣma
And Droṇa, excelled themselves in marvellous feats.

8 Shouting mahā-fiercely at Abhimanyu,
the mahā-chariot-hero Alambuṣa
repeatedly challenged him
on the field,

9 Shouting, "Stop! Stop!" In the meantime,
Abhimanyu also,
roaring with the energy of a lion,
fleet as wind,

10 Rushed at Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's brilliant bowman son
Alambuṣa,
his father's bitter foe.
Human and rākṣasa clashed fiercely,

11 Both expert chariot-heroes, facing each other
as god and Dānava-antigod.
The rākṣasa knew māyā, and Phālguni-Abhimanyu
was expert in celestial weapons.

12 Mahārāja! Krishna's nephew Abhimanyu
first wounded Alambuṣa
with three sharp arrows,
followed by five more.

13 Infuriated Alambuṣa retorted
with nine swift arrows
that struck Abhimanyu's chest,
like hooks piercing an elephant.

14 O Bharata! Then the night-prowling rākṣasa
fired thousands of arrows
with marvellous dexterity,
pinning down Arjuna's son.

15 Enraged Abhimanyu selected nine knotted
and specially sharpened shafts
to pierce the chest
of that Indra-among-rākṣasas.

16 They penetrated the very vitals
of the rākṣasa's body.
He stood there, shaft-pierced,
a huge hulk of a rākṣasa,

17 O rājā, like a mountain
sprouting flowering flames-of-the-forest.
Dotted with those golden-winged arrows,
the mahā-powerful,

18 Excellent rākṣasa looked
like a hill on fire.
Then revengeful rage overcame
the son of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga,

19 And with two winged arrows he wounded
the Indra-like nephew of Krishna.
The arrows,
resembling the rod of Yama,

20 Pierced Abhimanyu
and got embedded in the ground.
The gold-decorated arrows
fired by Ārjuni-Abhimanyu

21 Penetrated Alambusa and got embedded
in the ground.
Then Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu selected
straight shafts

22 And forced the rākṣasa to turn his face away
from the field,
as Śakra-Indra did Māyā.
Oppressed by Abhimanyu,

23 The rākṣasa with his mahā-māyā
created a thick smokescreen,
so that darkness shrouded
all the soldiers,

24 And none could make out who was Abhimanyu,
who friend, who foe.
To counter that impenetrable
night-gloom,

25 Abhimanyu, delighter of the Kaurava race,
O lord of the earth,
revealed his radiant sun-weapon,
and light again filled the field.

26 That weapon of finest-of-mortals Abhimanyu
neutralised the māyā
of the ill-ātmaned Indra-among rākṣasas
Then he angrily attacked

27 The rākṣasa with a volley of curved,
knotted arrows.
The rākṣasa resorted
to many other māyā-deceptions,

28 But all-weapons-expert Phālguni-Abhimanyu
foiled them all.
His māyā frustrated,
his body riddled with arrows,

29 The rākṣasa fled, abandoning his chariot
on the field.
After the deviously-fighting rākṣasa
had been worsted,

30 Arjuna's son Abhimanyu mopped up
your soldiers
like a furious elephant splashing
in a lotus-filled lake.

31 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma prevented
the total collapse of your army
with a mahā arrow-shower
at Saubhadra-Abhimanyu.

32 The mahā-chariot-heroes of your army
ringed heroic Abhimanyu
and pinned him down
with volleys of arrows.

33 Abhimanyu, whose martial skill
equalled his father's,
whose strength and valour equalled those
of Vāsudeva-Krishna,

34 Who was an acknowledged master
of all weapons,
performed wonders on the field
equalling his father's and maternal uncle's.

35 Heroic Arjuna, his tolerance exhausted,
eager to rescue his son,
slaughtered his way
to where Bhīṣma was stationed.

36 O rājā! Then strict-vowed Bhīṣma
intercepted Arjuna,
and the two clashed, like Svarbhānu-Rāhu
devouring the sun.

37 O lord of men! Your sons, with their cavalry
and chariots and elephants,
surrounded Bhīṣma with the protection
of the heaviest reinforcements.

38 So also the Pāṇḍavas, O bull-brave Bharata rājā,
surrounded Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
and prepared to display all their skills
and military prowess.

39 O rājā! Śaradvat's son Kṛpa,
positioned in front of Bhīṣma,
released a volley of twentyfive arrows
on Arjuna.

40 Like a tiger mauling an elephant,
Sātyaki,
eager to please the Pāṇḍavas,
wounded Kṛpa with sharp arrows.

41 Kṛpa, incensed, immediately fired nine
golden-winged arrows
that struck heroic Mādhava-Sātyaki
in the chest.

42 Not outdone, Sātyaki,
in a burst of fury,
bent his bow and fitted a fatal shaft
to eliminate Gautama-Kṛpa,

43 But Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
saw the radiant shaft
speeding like Indra's thunderbolt,
and sliced it in two.

44 The excellent Śini chariot-hero Sātyaki,
ignoring Gautama-Kṛpa,
attacked Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman
like Rāhu eclipsing the moon.

45 O Bharata! Droṇa's Aśvatthāman
severed Sātyaki's bow in two,
and proceeded systematically
to harass him.

46 Mahārāja! Lifting another foe-blocking
flexible bow,
Sātyaki with sixty arrows wounded
Aśvatthāman's chest and arms.

47 Severely injured, Aśvatthāman slumped down
in his chariot,
gripping the flagpole to prevent himself
from collapsing.

48 But amazingly resilient Aśvatthāman
soon recovered consciousness,
and angrily wounded Vārṣṇeya-Sātyaki
with a *nārāca*-arrow.

49 The long-stemmed arrow pierced Sātyaki's body
and plunged into the earth,
like a snake in springtime
slipping into its hole.

50 With a *bhalla* arrow
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman shredded
the flag of Mādhava-Sātyaki,
and screamed his leonine war-cry.

51 Again he deluged Sātyaki with arrows,
O Bharata mahārāja,
like clouds obscuring the sun
at the end of summer.

52 But Sātyaki pulverised all those arrows,
mahārāja,
and replied with a massive shower
of his own.

53 Sātyaki emerged from the shattered arrows
like the sun
from behind clouds,
and began scorching Droṇa's son.

54 Enraged beyond control, mahā-powerful Sātyaki
oppressed Aśvatthāman
with a thousand arrows –
and screamed his war-cry.

55 Seeing his son's predicament,
like the moon eclipsed by Rāhu,
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa rushed furiously
upon Śini's grandson Sātyaki.

56 In the mahā-fierce duel that followed, O rājā,
he wounded Sātyaki
with sharp arrows, in his eagerness
to rescue his son.

57 Ignoring the mahā-chariot-hero Aśvatthāman,
son of guru Droṇa,
Sātyaki targeted Droṇa himself
with twenty axe-edged arrows.

58 At this juncture, the mahā-chariot-hero
foe-crushing Kaunteya-Arjuna,
in a fierce burst of anger,
rushed upon Droṇa.

59 Droṇa and Arjuna clashed on the field,
mahārāja,
like the planets Budha and Śukra clashing
in space.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-TWO

1 "How did the brilliant mahā-bowman Droṇa,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"and Pāṇḍu's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna fare
in their duel?

2 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna is dear to wise Droṇa,
and ācārya Bhāradvāja-Droṇa
is also very dear to Pārtha-Arjuna,
on the field of battle.

3 These two mahā-chariot-heroes –
Bhāradvāja Droṇa and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna –
these lion-like heroes – how did they fight,
meeting face to face?"

4 In Kṣatriya-dharma (replied Sañjaya)
Pārtha-Arjuna is not dear to Droṇa,
nor is guru Droṇa
dear to Arjuna.

5 O rājā! Kṣatriyas have no such preferences
on the battlefield;
if required, they will fight
their fathers and brothers.

6 O Bharata! Arjuna began by wounding Droṇa
with three arrows,
but Droṇa treated them as if they were
not even fired.

7 Pārtha-Arjuna, again, fired a volley of arrows
at Droṇa –
which made Droṇa flare up with the fury
of a forest-fire.

8 O Bharata Indra-among-rājās!
He delayed Arjuna
with a shower of sharp, knotted
deadly arrows.

9 O rājā! Then rājā Duryodhana ordered
Suśarmā to proceed immediately
and protect the rear flank
of Droṇa.

10 The Trigarta ruler Suśarmā
pulled his bow taut
and harassed Arjuna
with numerous steel-tipped arrows.

11 Mahārāja, the arrows fired by Droṇa and Suśarmā
gleamed in the sky
like a flock of *haṁsa*-swans
in autumn.

12 *Prabhu!* Lord! The arrows sped towards Arjuna
gracefully
like flocks of birds
settling on a tree
loaded with delicious fruit.

13 The excellent chariot-hero Arjuna,
screaming his war-cry,
riddled the Trigarta rājā and his son
with a swarm of arrows.

14 Afflicted by Arjuna, who looked like Kāla
at the end of a yuga,
they rushed at him
in a desperate fatal attack.

15 They shot a steady stream of arrows
at Arjuna,
who received them, standing in his chariot,
as calmly

16 As a mountain receives, O Indra-among rājās,
a sudden shower of rain.
It was a pleasure to see the dreadful-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna

17 As he stood there all by himself,
easily dispersing the myriad arrows
like a strong wind
scattering clouds.

18 The gods and the Dānavas, O Bharata,
celebrated this feat of Pārtha-Arjuna.
Venting his anger on Suśarmā,
Pārtha-Arjuna

19 Fired the Vāyavya-missile, mahārāja,
into the Kaurava ranks.
The wind-weapon created a storm
that fouled the sky,

20 Levelled countless trees,
and disintegrated innumerable soldiers.
Immediately, observing the wind-weapon's havoc,
Droṇa

21 Released an awesome missile called the Śaila.
O lord of men!
The instant the Śaila was fired by Droṇa,
mahārāja,

22 The wind-storm subsided
and the sky-points cleared.
Then Arjuna demoralised the chariot-heroes
of Suśarmā,

23 And forced them to face away
from the field of battle.
Duryodhana and that excellent hero
of chariot-heroes Kṛpa,

24 Aśvatthāman, Śalya, and the Kāmboja ruler Sudakṣiṇa,
The two Avanti princes Vinda and Anuvinda, and
Bāhlīka,

25 With a huge force of chariots, encircled Arjuna.
Bhagadatta and mahā-powerful Śrutāyus,

26 With a huge force of elephants, surrounded Bhīma.
O lord of the earth! Bhūriśravas, Śala, and Subala's
son Śakuni

27 Repulsed Nakula and Sahadeva with sharp, shining
arrows.
Bhīṣma, with the help of the army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's
sons,

28 Approached Yudhiṣṭhira and ringed his forces in.
Seeing the elephants advancing towards his brother,
Wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma

29 Licked the corners of his mouth
like a forest lion.
Then the excellent chariot-hero,
gripping his mace firmly,

30 Leapt from his chariot and spread terror
among your soldiers.
The elephant-soldiers, seeing him standing
mace in hand,

31 Warily surrounded him. He looked handsome,
Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma
standing amid that force
of war-elephants,

32 Like the sun blazing amid a mahā-cluster
of dark clouds.
Then the bull-brave Pāṇḍava began agitating
the elephants,

33 Like a tempest dispersing a mahā-congregation
of clouds.
Battered by hugely powerful Bhīma,
the elephants

34 Trumpeted fierce shrieks,
like masses of storm-clouds.
And lacerated by the tusks
of the war-elephants,

35 Bhīma's body shone
like a flowering aśoka tree.
He gripped the tusks hard,
and wrenched them out,

36 And using them as weapons
to smite their temples with,
he felled the beasts,
like Antaka-Death wielding his rod.

37 With his mace dripping blood, his body splashed
with fat and marrow,
he looked the very embodiment
of Rudra-Śiva.

38 The survivors of that decimated force
of war-elephants
ran amok on the field,
trampling their own warriors.

39 O bull-brave Bharata! Their elephant power shattered,
and the beasts running amok,
Duryodhana's army had no choice
but to retreat.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-THREE

1 In the afternoon, mahārāja, began the combat
(said Sañjaya)
between Bhīṣma and the Somakas –
a gory, world-shattering encounter.

2 The excellent chariot-hero Bhīṣma
harassed the Pāṇḍavas
with sharp arrows fired
in hundreds and thousands.

3 Your strict-vowed *pitā* Devavrata-Bhīṣma
pummelled the Pāṇḍavas
as easily as bullocks crushing
a heap of paddy.

4 Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍin, Virāṭa
and Drupada attacked
the maha-chariot-hero Bhīṣma
with countless arrows.

5 Wounding Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Virāṭa
with three arrows, O Bharata,
Bhīṣma fired a long-stemmed *nārāca*-shaft
at Drupada.

6 Targeted by Bhīṣma, that brilliant bowman,
O rājā,
chafed and writhed,
like a snake ground underfoot.

7 Śikhaṇḍin attacked Pitāmaha Bhīṣma,
who, recalling
the feminine birth of Śikhaṇḍin,
refrained from counter-attacking.

8 But Dhṛṣṭadyumna like a raging fire
injured Bhīṣma
in his chest and arms
with twenty-five arrows.

9 Drupada fired twentyfive, Virāṭa fired ten,
and Śikhaṇḍin fired twentyfive arrows
that succeeded
in wounding Bhīṣma.

10 Mahārāja, lacerated and dripping blood,
Bhīṣma looked
as glorious as a flowering aśoka tree
in springtime.

11 Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma replied with three
straight-speeding arrows for each adversary.
O gracious monarch, with a broad-head shaft
he split Drupada's bow.

12 Drupada fitted another bow and wounded Bhīṣma
with five arrows,
and his charioteer
with three sharp arrows.

13 Then, mahārāja, Bhīma, the five sons of Draupadī,
The five Kekaya brothers, Sātyaki of the Sātvatas,

14 Led by Yudhiṣṭhira himself, rushed at Gāṅgeya-
Bhīṣma,
Intending to rescue the Pāñcālas under Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

15 O lord of men! Your leaders also, eager to protect
Bhīṣma,
Rushed with their soldiers against the Pāṇḍavas.

16 A brutal, grisly clash ensued
between your horses,
elephants and chariots, and theirs –
a gruesome carnage
that added hugely to the population
of Yama's realm.

17 Chariot-heroes sent other chariot-heroes
to the abode of Yama,
as did soldiers, cavalry, and elephant-riders
on both sides.

18 O lord of the earth! The warriors of both armies,
with knotted arrows of all sizes,
sent their adversaries
to their deaths.

19 Driver-less and warrior-less chariots
careened across the battlefield,
in an orgy
of directionless destruction.

20 O rājā! They rolled on and pulped
countless men and horses,
and the wind-swift chariots
looked like aerial gandharva cities.

21 Many unchamioted chariot-heroes,
encased in full armour,
decorated with ear-rings, head-gear,
bracelets and garlands,

22 Looking like sons of gods equalling Śakra-Indra
in glory,
as prosperous as Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera
and as shrewd as Bṛhaspati,

23 Rulers of vast territories, O lord of the earth,
all brilliant heroes,
fled chaotically and were killed
like ordinary men.

24 Massive war-elephants, their drivers killed,
buckled and collapsed,
trumpeting and crushing, O finest of men,
their own ranks.

25 Their armour, their colourful flags,
yaktail fans,
white umbrellas with golden poles destroyed,
O gracious monarch,

26 The huge war-elephants fled
in all ten directions,
like freshly-formed clouds,
and thundering like them.

27 With their elephants killed, the mahouts,
O lord of the earth,
confusedly fled in the tumult
of the battle.

28 We saw horses from many regions,
swift as wind,
caparisoned in gold, running wild
in hundreds and thousands.

29 We saw horseless riders,
naked swords in hand,
chasing and being chased
on the blood-soaked field.

30 One war-elephant colliding headlong
with another
crushed in the process countless soldiers
and horses.

31 O rājā! We saw single elephants trampling
many of our chariots,
and chariots mowing down horses
to bloody pulp.

32 And horses would kick and crush
and kill foot-soldiers, O rājā.
They all trampled and killed each other,
O rājā.

33 In that horrible
and mahā-fearful war
a river of blood
a hideous river
began to flow

34 Choked with bones
hair its weeds
chariots its islands
arrows its whirlpools
horses its fish

35 Soldiers' heads its stones
elephants its sharks
head-gear its froth
bows its currents
swords its tortoises

36 Trees on the banks its flags
warriors its banks
suffering erosion
flesh-eaters its *haṁsa*-swans –
All adding to the population
of Yama's kingdom.

37 And Kṣatriya heroes O rājā
crossed this river
on their rafts of chariots
and horses and elephants
with unabated energy.

38 Like the river Vaitaraṇī
    that carries the spirits
    of the dead to the realm
    of the rājā of spirits
    so this river at noon
    transported the cowards
    away in a swoon . . .

39 The Kṣatriya heroes witnessed
    the incredible bloodshed
and said: "Duryodhana's crime is destroying
    the Kṣatriyas.

40 Why did lord-of-men Dhṛtarāṣṭra
    envy the glory
of the virtuous guṇa-laden Pāṇḍavas?
    He was swayed by greed."

41 All over the field
    such statements could be heard,
praising the Pāṇḍavas
    and condemning your sons.

42 Hearing these sentiments voiced
    by the warring soldiers,
your son Duryodhana,
    harmer of the world's people,

43 O Bharata, said to Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Kṛpa and Śalya:
"Fight! Fight selflessly! Do not delay."

44 O rājā! Then erupted the battle
    between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
whose origin was the dice-game,
    whose end was all-embracing doom.

45 Son of Vicitravīrya,
    see now the fruit of your refusal
to accept the counsel
    of your many mahātmā heroes.

46 Neither the Pāṇḍavas nor the Kauravas
    have the least concern for their lives
in this hideous battle,
    O rājā.

47 O king! That is why this disaster has struck
the family of mankind.
Call it destiny, or your unjust policy, as you will,
O tiger-among-men.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-FOUR

1 Tiger-among-men Arjuna, with sharp arrows
(continued Sañjaya)
despatched those coming after Suśarmā
to the realm of the rājā of spirits.

2 First Suśarmā harassed Arjuna
with many arrows;
then he wounded Vāsudeva-Krishna with seventy
and Arjuna with nine.

3 Neutralising them with a counter-shower
of arrows,
the mahā-chariot-hero Śakra-Indra's son
killed the supporters of Suśarmā.

4 The survivors, oppressed as if by Kāla
at the end of a yuga,
though mahā-chariot-heroes,
fled from the battlefield.

5 O gracious monarch! Some abandoned their horses,
other their chariots,
others their elephants,
and fled to all the various quarters.

6 Others, however, utilised their horses, chariots,
and elephants for flight –
running away as fast as they could,
O lord of the earth.

7 In that brutal clash, foot-soldiers flung aside
their weapons
and, disobeying orders, fled in panic,
O Bharata.

8 Commanded again and again
by the Trigarta ruler Suśarmā
and other royal leaders,
they nevertheless panicked and fled.

9 Witnessing the rout of his army,
your son Duryodhana,
with Bhīṣma leading
and he following,

10 Energetically attacked Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
O lord of the earth,
hoping to rescue
the king of the Trigartas.

11 Suśarmā's soldiers had all fled.
He alone,
with his brothers, withstood Arjuna
with arrows.

12 The Pāṇḍavas also, all in armour,
hurried grimly
to where Bhīṣma was,
hoping, O rājā, to rescue Arjuna.

13 Aware of the incalculably immense strength
of Arjuna,
the Pāṇḍava heroes advanced on Bhīṣma,
shouting "Hai! Hai!"

14 The palmyra-emblemed hero Bhīṣma deluged
the Pāṇḍava warriors
with a steady volley of sharp,
knotted arrows.

15 The sun rose to its peak, mahārāja,
and the battle proceeded,
with the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas
locked in slaughter.

16 Wounding Kṛtavarman
with five swift-speeding arrows,
brave Sātyaki harassed others
with thousands of shafts.

17 After cornering Droṇa with sharp arrows,
rājā Drupada
wounded him with seventy
and his charioteer with five more.

18 Bhīma roared his war-cry
like a forest lion,
and wounded his great-grandfather,
the ruler of Bāhlīka.

19 Wounded by Citrasena
with many swift arrows,
Arjuna's son Abhimanyu in reply
wounded him with three.

20 In that splendid duel,
the two excellent heroes
resembled the clash of the planets
Budha and Śanaiścara.

21 The foe-annihilating son of Subhadrā,
brave Abhimanyu,
screaming, killed Citrasena's horses and charioteeer
with nine arrows.

22 The mahā-chariot-hero Citrasena
leapt off his chariot
and quickly climbed into the chariot
of Durmukha.

23 O lord of the earth! Droṇa attacked Drupada
with straight shafts,
and proceeded swiftly to wound the charioteer
of Drupada.

24 Rājā Drupada, unable to contain
the fierce assault,
fled in his chariot, witnessed by everyone,
and as he fled he recalled

25 His bitter earlier enmity with Droṇa.
Bhīma destroyed the horses
of Bāhlīka, then his chariot,
and finally his charioteer.

26 Temporarily bewildered and imperilled,
mahārāja,
the excellent hero Bāhlika,
in the thick of the battle,

27 Left his chariot and climbed
into the chariot of Lakṣmaṇa.
Meanwhile, Sātyaki,
after defeating Kṛtavarman,

28 Advanced towards Pitāmaha Bhīṣma.
Wounding Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
with a volley of sixty specially-sharpened,
feathered arrows,

29 He seemed to be dancing
in his chariot
as he wielded his bow.
Bhīṣma hurled an all-iron *śakti*,

30 Decorated with gold, and swift-speeding,
as enchanting as a Nāga girl.
Seeing the fearful mahā-*śakti*
approaching,

31 The Vṛṣṇi hero disintegrated it in mid-air
with a swift
neutralising anti-missile,
with perfect ease and calm.

32 The horrendously powerful *śakti*-missile
struck the earth in fragments
like a huge meteor
of dazzling velocity.

33 Then Sātyaki, O rājā,
with his *śakti*, prepared
to reply – and he flung
the radiant missile
with unerring aim
at the chariot of Bhīṣma.

34 Hurled with the full force
of Sātyaki's powerful arm,
the *śakti* sped with the swiftness
of a dying man's last night.

35 But Bhīṣma pulverised the missile
with two horseshoe-headed arrows;
the fragments crashed
on the ground.

36 Infuriated but apparently smiling,
the foe-grinding hero Bhīṣma
pierced Sātyaki's chest
with nine arrows.

37 Listen, elder brother of Pāṇḍu!
Then the Pāṇḍavas
encircled Bhīṣma with their cavalry,
chariots and elephants.

38 And so the horripilating battle between
the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas continued,
each side hopeful
of final victory.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-FIVE

1 Mahārāja! Seeing infuriated Bhīṣma
hemmed in by the Pāṇḍavas,
like the sun
by summer clouds,

2 Mahārāja, Duryodhana said to Duḥśāsana,
"Heroic Bhīṣma,
brilliant bowman and slayer-of-his-foes,
O bull-brave Bharata,

3 Is surrounded by the Pāṇḍava forces.
It is your duty
to see how you can rescue
the mahātmā hero.

4 If we can offer him adequate protection,
our Pitāmaha Bhīṣma
will certainly wipe out
the Pāñcāla contingent.

5 Our basic tusk now is the protection
of mahā-vowed Bhīṣma,
because that brilliant bowman
is our saviour.

6 March, therefore, and give him what help
he needs.
See that he is protected
as he performs splendid feats."

7 Ordered by your son Duryodhana,
Duḥśāsana advanced
with a huge force, specially deployed
for Bhīṣma's protection.

8 He made all plans for the task
entrusted to him.
Meanwhile, Subala's son Śakuni,
with hundreds of thousands of cavalry,
brandishing shining spears,
swords and lances,

9 And an enormous striking force
of foot-soldiers
carrying war-flags
and specially trained for rescue,

10 Moved forward. He was wearing
his coat of armour,
and he dazzled on the field
at the head of his soldiers,

11 And he attacked first
the three Pāṇḍava brothers:
Nakula and Sahadeva,
and heroic Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

12 Rājā Duryodhana ordered a crack contingent
of cavalry –
ten thousand horses –
to attack the Pāṇḍavas.

13 Horses as swift as Garuḍa were now deployed.
Subala's son Śakuni
shone with the glory
of those excellent horse-soldiers,

14 Just as Vāsava-Indra shines
with the glory of the Maruts.
O rājā! The earth shook under the hooves
of the charging horses.

15 The fearful thunder of horses' hooves
sounded like the crackle
of a mahā-bamboo grove afire
on a hill.

16 As they charged
mahā-clouds of dust
rose sky-high
reaching the sun
and shrouding its light.

17 And the Pāṇḍava army wavered
as the horses charged,
like a lake when swans hurriedly flap down
on its waters.

18 The neighing of the steeds drowned
all other sounds.
Harassed by the unexpected attack
of the wind-swift cavalry,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira and the twin sons
of Mādrī

19 Stood firm, bearing the brunt of the charge,
mahārāja,
like the shores of the ocean withstanding
buffeting tides
on a full moon night when monsoon rains
swell the waters.

20 The three Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes,
O rājā,
decapitated the cavalry leaders
with their knotted arrows,
and the riders toppled, mahārāja,
fatally stricken,

21 Like elephants toppling down cliffs,
killed by other elephants.
The brave Pāṇḍavas,
with arrows and spears,

22 Intercepted and decapitated the cavalry
as it galloped on the field.
Some horse-riders;
sliced by swords,

23 Dropped their heads like huge trees
dropping fruit.
In that colossal slaughter,
horses and their riders

24 Crumpled, fell, and perished.
The remainder of the cavalry,
mutilated and terrified, fled from the field,
O rājā,

25 Like deer scampering for their lives
from a lion.
Having bewildered and decimated their foes,
the Pāṇḍavas, mahārāja,

26 Blew their conches and beat *bheri*-drums
in victory.
Depressed by the utter rout of his soldiers,
Duryodhana,

27 O bull-brave Bharata, said to the Madra-rājā,
"Pāṇḍu's eldest son Yudhiṣṭhira,
reinforced by Nakula and Sahadeva,
his twin brothers,

28 Is butchering my army, O mahā-muscled one,
in front of my eyes.
Stop him now, like the shores containing
the *makara*-filled ocean.

29 Everyone has heard
of your invincible strength and valour."
Hearing the words of your son,
valiant Śalya,

30 With a force of chariots, rushed to where
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira stood.
The massive striking contingent
of Śalya

31 Fell upon the Pāṇḍava force
with mahā-fury,
but Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira stood firm
and blocked the assault.

32 With ten sharp arrows he lacerated
the chest of the Madra-rājā;
the twins wounded him
with seven.

33 The Madra-rājā wounded them
with three arrows each,
and harassed Yudhiṣṭhira
with sixty sharp shafts.

34 He again shot two arrows each
at Mādrī's twin sons,
and continued his advantage over Yudhiṣṭhira
with fresh attacks.

35 Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira's predicament,
mahā-muscled Bhīma
drove up close to the chariot
of the rājā of Madra,
and spirited Yudhiṣṭhira away
from the jaws of death.

36 With extremely sharp *nārāca*-arrows,
crafted of steel
and smoothly polished,
he wounded heroic Śalya.

37 Śalya was saved by the timely arrival
of Bhīṣma and Droṇa,
assisted by a force
of veteran warriors.

38 The sun was slowly beginning its descent
in the west
when a mahā-horrendous clash bloodied
the two armies.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-SIX

1 Your *pitā* Bhīṣma, uncontrollably roused
(continued Sañjaya),
released a volley of splendid arrows
on the Pāṇḍavas.

2 Wounding Bhīma with twelve,
Sātyaki with nine,
Nakula with three, Sahadeva with seven,
he targeted

3 Yudhiṣṭhira with twelve arrows
in the arms and chest.
Wounding Dhṛṣṭadyumna also,
he screamed his war-cry.

4 Nakula replied with twelve arrows,
Sātyaki with three,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna with seventy,
and Bhīma with seven arrows,

5 While Yudhiṣṭhira fired twelve
which wounded Pitāmaha Bhīṣma.
Droṇa, after wounding Sātyaki,
attacked Bhīma

6 With five specially sharpened arrows
resembling Yama's rod.
But Sātyaki and Bhīma countered
with three shafts

7 Which lacerated the bull-brave Brahmin Droṇa
like a hook gouging a huge war-elephant.
The Sauviras, Kitavas, Prācyas, Praticyas, Udicyas,
Mālavas,

8 Abhīṣāhas, Śūrasenas, Śibis, and Vasātis –
Though oppressed by Bhīṣma, did not flee.

9 Countless rulers of territories,
all variously armed,
concertedly attacked the Pāṇḍavas
in that fierce encounter.

10 The Pāṇḍavas also succeeded in encircling
Pitāmaha-Bhīṣma, who,
noticing the ring of mahā-charioteers
closing in, O rājā,

11 Burst out with the fury
of a fire in a forest –
his chariot the oven, his bow the flames,
his sword,
mace and spear and other weapons
the fuel,

12 His arrows the sparks,
and he himself the blaze
consuming the forest of bull-brave Kṣatriyas.
With his arrows
fitted with golden wings, vulture-feathers,
shot swiftly,

13 With *nalīka* pipe-guns,
barbed and long-stemmed shafts,
he harassed the Pāṇḍavas,
butchering elephants and chariot-heroes.

14 He made the massive force of chariot heroes
look like
a palm-tree grove with the tree tops
shorn off, O rājā.
Horses riderless, charioteers driverless,
elephants without mahouts –

15 Such was mahā-muscled, versed-in-weapons'
Bhīṣma's achievement.
Hearing the thunderous twang
of the bow of Bhīṣma,

16 All creatures on the battlefield trembled,
O bull-brave Bharata,
because no one seemed to know how to counter
your *pitā*'s arrows.

17 Bhīṣma's arrows did not merely strike,
O rājā –
they pierced and shredded their targets.
Chariots dragged by their steeds –

18 This we saw, mahārāja, with our own eyes,
on the field.
Fourteen thousand Cedi, Kāśī,
and Karūṣa

19 Mahā-chariot-heroes,
all from the finest families,
never known to retreat in battle,
flying golden standards,

20 Willing to fight to the death
in the clash with Bhīṣma,
were despatched
to the other side of life
by Antaka-Death-like Bhīṣma,
with their horses and chariots.

21 We saw, O Bharata mahārāja,
hundreds and thousands of chariots,
their axles shattered,
their frames and wheels smashed,

22 Their wood-guards splintered,
them heroic warriors toppled,
with lovely crumpled armours, battle-axes, arrows,
O lord of the earth,

23 With maces, short arrows, and sharpened shafts,
finely polished,
with quivers, chariot frames and wheels,
O gracious monarch,

24 With swords and bows,
with heads glittering with earrings,
with leather finger-guards and gloves,
with smashed poles,

25 With bows broken, littering the battlefield,
O rājā.
Elephants with their riders killed,
and butchered cavalry men,

26 Tumbled and collapsed in hundreds and thousands
on the field.
Harassed by the ceaseless shower
of Bhīṣma's arrows,

27 The mahā-chariot-heroes could be seen fleeing
in pure panic.
The huge Pāṇḍava army, decimated
by Mahendra-Indra-like Bhīṣma,

28 Was so demoralised that no two soldiers
fled together.
Its chariots, elephants, horses destroyed,
flags shredded, mahārāja,

29 The soldiers of the sons of Pāṇḍu
semi-consciously
groaned "Hai! Hai!"
Father killed son, son killed father,

30 *Sakhā*-friend killed *sakhā*-friend,
in that fate-propelled carnage.
Many of the Pāṇḍava soldiers
cast off their armour

31 And fled with dishevelled hair.
They scattered in terror
like bulls,
throwing off their yokes –

32 The Pāṇḍava warriors in all parts
of the field,
screaming in pain. Seeing the army routed,
delighter-of-the-Yādavas Krishna

33 Reined his chariot and said to Pārtha-Arjuna:
"Dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu!
At last the time has come, Arjuna,
for which you have waited.

34 Attack now, O tiger among men,
before despair seizes you?
The promise you made
before the rājās

35 In the capital of Virāṭa,
in front of Sañjaya,
was: 'Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons
and followers –

36 I will kill them all,
whoever dares to fight me!'
Kuntī's son, valiant foe-crusher,
keep your promise!

37 Keep a Kṣatriya's dharma in mind.
Fight without fear."
Listening to Vāsudeva-Krishna,
with head lowered and eyes askance,

38 Bībhatsu-Arjuna said, almost indifferently:
"Either the hell
of a kingdom got by killing those
who should not be killed,

39 Or to live in exile
and suffer all my life –
which is better? I will do what you say,
Drive me to Bhīṣma.

40 I will kill Bhīṣma,
the Pitāmaha of the Kauravas."
Mādhava-Krishna urged the silver-white horses
to the spot

41 Where Bhīṣma stood, as dazzling as the sun,
O rājā.
Thus it happened –
Yudhiṣṭhira's panic-stricken soldiers rallied

42 When they saw mahā-muscled Pārtha-Arjuna
heading for Bhīṣma.
Finest-of-Kauravas Bhīṣma screamed out
his fierce lion-like war-cry,

43 And deluged the chariot of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
with arrows.
Arjuna's chariot, his horses, and his charioteer,
in an instant,

44 Disappeared in the thick downpour
of swift arrows.
But Vasudeva's son Krishna fearlessly
and very patiently

45 Controlled the arrow-mutilated horses.
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna
lifted his divine
cloud-reverberating bow

46 And splintered Bhīṣma's bow
with sharp arrows.
His bow shattered,
instantly fitting another bow,

47 Your *pitā* Bhīṣma prepared
the cloud-roaring weapon,
and lifted it with both hands
till fully taut.

48 Arjuna furiously targeted
and destroyed that bow also.
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma pujā-praised
that remarkable feat.

49 O foe-crushing monarch! Commending his dexterity,
Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma exclaimed:
"*Sādhu! Sādhu!* Excellent! Excellent!
Kuntī's son! O mahā-muscled one!"

50 After applauding Arjuna,
Bhīṣma chose another splendid bow
and began harassing Pārtha-Arjuna
with arrow-showers.

51 But Vāsudeva-Krishna, with maṇḍala-manoeuvring
evasive chariot-strategy,
mitigated the fury of the arrow-assault
of Bhīṣma.

52 Krishna continued to display
unparalleled driving skill,
as Bhīṣma persisted in his arrow-attacks
on Arjuna.

53 A marvellous feat, O Indra-among-rājās!
Foe-crushing Arjuna countered
the assaults of Bhīṣma
with fierce volleys of his own.

54 His arrows fell like heavy downpours
of rain.
The two heroes did not pause at all
in their duel.

55 Lacerated by the arrows of Bhīṣma,
tigers-among-men Arjuna and Krishna
looked like two battling bulls mangled
by lunging horns.

56 Bhīṣma suddenly fired an arrow
that grazed Arjuna's forehead,
and triumphantly screamed
his leonine fierce war-cry.

57 Vāsudeva-Krishna noticed Pārtha-Arjuna
was fighting indifferently,
and treating Bhīṣma, so it appeared,
with lenience.

58 Bhīṣma, on the other hand, stood midfield
like the sun at its zenith,
scorching the brilliant heroes
of Pāṇḍu's sons,

59 And appearing like Kāla at the end of a yuga
to destroy the army of Yudhiṣṭhira.
Impossible for mahā-muscled hero-annihilating
Mādhava-Krishna to tolerate this any further!

60 Flinging aside the reins
of Pārtha-Arjuna's white horsed-chariot,
Yogī Vāsudeva-Krishna leapt out
of the splendid vehicle, O gracious monarch,

61 And shouting war-cries like a lion,
radiant and swift and strong,
whip in hand,
he charged towards Bhīṣma.

62 World-lord Jagadīśvara-Krishna,
eyes copper-red in anger,
sprinted towards Bhīṣma,
and the earth trembled.

63 And your soldiers stood petrified
with terrible fear
when they saw Mādhava-Krishna
about to pounce upon Bhīṣma.

64 Suddenly there were mahā-shouts all over the field:
"Bhīṣma is finished! Bhīṣma is finished!" –
your soldiers, mahārāja,
terrified by Vāsudeva-Krishna.

65 Blue-skinned Krishna, in saffron silk,
charging at Bhīṣma,
lapis lazuli-complexioned Janārdana,
punisher-of-people,
looked as beautiful as a rain-cloud
flashing with lightning.

66 Like a lion attacking an elephant,
like a leader-bull attacking a bull,
the roaring bull-brave Yādava
attacked Bhīṣma.

67 Seeing lotus-eyed Krishna advancing,
Bhīṣma was not dismayed.
He stood firm, stretching his mahā-bow
fully taut.

68 Unperturbed he spoke to Govinda-Krishna:
"Lotus-eyed one! Puṇḍarīkākṣa, come!
God of gods, accept my namaskāra!
Deva-deva!

69 Kill me in this mahā-massacre,
O finest of the Sātvatas!
O immaculate one, to be killed by you,
O Anagha-Krishna,

70 Will bring me the greatest good
in the world.
The three worlds will honour me for it,
O Govinda-Krishna.

71 I am your slave, Keśava-Krishna.
Kill me if it pleases you."
Meanwhile,
mahā-muscled Arjuna rushed

72 And encircled lotus-eyed Krishna firmly
in his arms.
Imprisoned in Pārtha-Arjuna's embrace,
Krishna,

73 Best-among-men Puruṣottama,
continued pushing ahead,
dragging Pārtha-Arjuna with him.
Brave, foe-crushing Arjuna

74 Then held on to Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna's legs,
and stopped him
after ten more steps.
Krishna's eyes flashed angrily;

75 He panted, hissing like a Nāga-snake.
His *sakhā*-friend Arjuna,
worried, said gently: "O mahā-muscled one!
Do not break your word.

76 Keśava! Remember you had promised:
'I will not fight.'
Do not compel people to call you a liar,
Mādhava.

77 Leave the burden to me!
I will kill the Pitāmaha.
By my weapons, by truth, by will power,
I swear I will do so, Keśava!

78 I will destroy all my enemies!
O destroyer of enemies!
Today you will see me wipe out
the mahā-chariot-heroes

79 As easily as the star-lord full-moon
wipes out darkness."
Hearing the vow of mahātmā Phālguna-Arjuna,
Mādhava-Krishna,

80 Realising how illustrious a warrior
Pārtha-Arjuna was,
without a word, suppressing his anger,
returned to his chariot.
Seeing tigers-among-men Krishna and Arjuna
return, Śāntanu's son

81 Bhīṣma recommenced his arrow-assault,
like rain-clouds assailing two hills.
Your *pitā* Devavrata-Bhīṣma
oppressed them

82 Like the summer heat sucking up energy
from creatures.
As easily as the Pāṇḍavas shattered the ranks
of your soldiers,

83 Your *pitā* harassed the ranks
of the Pāṇḍavas.
The terrified soldiers,
in a state of utter demoralisation,

84 Did not have the courage even to look
at radiant Bhīṣma,
just as none dares to look
at the flaming midday sun.

85 Harassed and panic-stricken,
the Pāṇḍavas' soldiers
stood dumbfounded,
witnessing Bhīṣma's superhuman feats.

86 O Bharata mahārāja, the Pāṇḍavas were reduced
to helplessness.
From the onslaught of the ceaselessly
attacking Bhīṣma,

87 They found no succour,
they were like cattle trapped in a bog,
like ants scurrying away
from a terrifying predator.

88 The Pāṇḍavas feared
to look at heroic
and invincible Bhīṣma
whose arrows tormented
the ranks of their leaders
like blinding sunrays.

89 And as Bhīṣma relentlessly
harassed the Pāṇḍavas,
the thousand-rayed sun
was slowly setting.
Exhausted, the soldiers
waited to withdraw.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-SEVEN

1 And so the fighting ended that day
(continued Sañjaya),
the sun set, *saṁdhyā*-twilight came,
all was dark.

2 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira, seeing *saṁdhyā* set in
and noticing
how Bhīṣma-oppressed warriors
had flung away their weapons,

3 Seeing them terrified and spiritless
and bewildered,
fleeing from the field of battle
helter-skelter,
unable to bear the increasing trauma
of Bhīṣma,

4 Seeing the Somaka mahā-chariot-heroes
losing hope
as the all-covering shadows of night
filled the field,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira ordered his armies to withdraw
to their camp.

5 All the time the mind of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
was planning
how best to contain the attacks
of mahā-powerful Bhīṣma.

6 And so rājā Yudhiṣṭhira ordered
the Pāṇḍava retreat,
at the same time as your soldiers retreated
to their camp.

7 The mahā-chariot-heroes of both armies,
badly wounded,
withdrew their forces and retired,
O most excellent Kaurava.

8 The Pāṇḍavas were restless:
they thought only of the arrows
of Bhīṣma and his incredible
military feats.

9 After his victory over the Pāṇḍavas
and the Sṛñjayas,
respected and honoured by your sons,
brave Bhīṣma

10 Entered his tent
with a host of Kaurava followers.
Night fell, bringing sleep to all
the world's creatures.

11 In the early hour of night,
the Pāṇḍavas
and Vṛṣṇis and Sṛñjayas gathered
for secret discussion.

12 The mahā-powerful heroes were expert in coming
to a practical decision
based on what was convenient
and achievable.

13 *How best to kill Bhīṣma*
and rule the world?
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
thought it over deeply and,
glancing in Vāsudeva-Krishna's direction,
said to him:

14 "Krishna, you have seen how Bhīṣma
the valiant mahatma,
like an elephant, crushes my army
as if it were forest-weeds.

15 How are we to oppose him
when he so brazenly oppresses us?
Mādhava-Krishna, listen to me,
and show us how.

16 You are our only hope,
there is no other.
It does not please us to fight Bhīṣma,
O Mādhava-Krishna.
But Bhīṣma continues his slaughter
of my soldiers.

17 He licks them up,
like a fierce all-consuming fire.
We dare not even look this mahātmā
in the face.

18 Expert-in-arms and fierce-in-rage
Bhīṣma
looks like the dreadful venomous serpent,
mahā-Nāga Takṣaka.

19 He is the very embodiment of ferocity
on the field.
He is wrathful Yama, he is the thunder-wielding
Deva-rāja Indra,

20 He is Varuṇa with his noose,
Dhaneśvara-Kubera with his mace.
These gods can be defeated in a mahā-war,
but not angry Bhīṣma.

21 That being so, I cannot think clearly.
I despair
when I think that our foe on the field
is Bhīṣma.

22 I think I will retire to the forest.
Better that, O undefeatable Krishna.
War to me is distasteful,
with Bhīṣma routing my soldiers.

23 A moth fluttering into a fire
finds death;
so have I, in daring to fight
great Bhīṣma.

24 O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna! No matter how hard I try,
I face only doom.
My heroic brothers are all victims
of Bhīṣma's arrows.

25 Madhusūdana-Krishna! They love me,
so they followed me into forest-exile.
Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī also suffered greatly,
all for my sake.

26 I value life.
It seems even more precious now.
If I survive, I will devote myself
to supreme dharma.

27 If you care for me and my brothers,
advise me on my sva-dharma.
Show me what is best for me,
O Keśava-Krishna."

28 Listening to the plight of Yudhiṣṭhira,
narrated in such detail,
Krishna was moved by compassion
and tried to console him:

29 "Dharma's son, cast off grief.
You are firm in truth,
you have brothers
who are heroic foe-crushing warriors.

30 Arjuna is like wind, Bhīma is like fire,
Nakula and Sahadeva
are the equal of the lord of heaven
Indra himself.

31 I am your friend, O Pāṇḍava mahārāja.
You can depend on me too.
I will fight Bhīṣma in this mahā-battle.
What will I not do for you?

32 I will kill bull-brave Bhīṣma
in the presence of his soldiers –
if Phālguna-Arjuna refuses
to do so.

33 If you think killing Bhīṣma, O Pāṇḍava,
is the only way to win,
I will today drive my chariot to him
and kill the Kuru Pitāmaha.

34 O rājā! My skill in battle equals that
of Mahendra-Indra.
Despite his mahā-weapons, I will hurl Bhīṣma
out of his chariot.

35 An enemy of the Pāṇḍavas
I treat as my enemy.
Your friends are my friends,
my friends are yours.

36 Your brother Arjuna is my *sakhā,*
my loved-and-loving friend,
my relative and pupil. I will cut off my flesh
for Phālguna-Arjuna.

37 Tiger-among-men Arjuna
will gladly die for me.
Tāta! Dear one! We are committed
to protect each other.

38 O Indra among rājās,
command me to fight for you.
The vow that Pārtha-Arjuna made earlier
at Upaplavya,

39 In the presence of everyone,
'I will kill Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma',
should be kept,
and I will help wise Arjuna keep it.

40 It is my duty to help Pārtha-Arjuna
fulfil his vow.
It seems to me that it is easy enough
for Phālguna-Arjuna.

41 Arjuna can kill Bhīṣma,
the destroyer of hostile cities –
but only if he puts all his energies
into the task.

42 O lord of the earth! Arjuna can kill all the gods
and the Daityas and Dānavas
if he so wishes.
He can kill Bhīṣma too, naturally.

43 Śāntanu's mahā-valiant son Bhīṣma
has lost his judgment.
He does not have long to live.
He does not know what he should do."

44 "Mahā-muscled Mādhava Krishna,
what you say is right,"
replied Yudhiṣṭhira.
"The Kauravas are no match for you.

45 Since you are on my side,
O tiger-among-men,
I can be sure
of obtaining all that I desire.

46 With you to lead us, O Govinda,
O most valiantly victorious one,
why only the mahā-chariot hero Bhīṣma –
we can defeat even Indra and all the gods.

47 But I do not wish to have you break your vow,
O Mādhava-Krishna,
for the sake of my glory.
Help me, therefore, but without fighting.

48 Before this battle,
I had an agreement with Bhīṣma.
He said, 'I will advise you,
but not fight for you.

49 I will fight for Duryodhana.
Prabhu! Lord! This is my truth.'
He will give me good advice, Mādhava-Krishna,
to regain my kingdom.

50 Let us go then to him, Madhusūdana-Krishna,
– and you will accompany us –
and ask Bhīṣma to tell us the means
by which he can be killed.

51 We shall go quickly ot the finest-of-men Bhīṣma,
O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna,
and obtain from the Kaurava elder
this essential information.

52 He is bound by honour to give us good advice,
Janārdana-Krishna –
and we shall follow it to the letter, Krishna,
on the battlefield.

53 Strict-vowed Bhīṣma will not only give us advice –
he will give us victory.
When we were fatherless as little children,
he brought us up.

54 O Mādhava-Krishna, imagine –
I want to kill this old Pitāmaha,
the father of my father.
Dhīk! Shame! Shame on being a Kṣatriya!"

55 Mahārāja (continued Sañjaya),
Vārṣṇeya-Krishna said to Yudhiṣṭhira:
"You are mahā-wise, O Indra-among-rājās.
I endorse your plan.

56 Strict-vowed Bhīṣma
is an absolute weapons-expert.
He can destroy his enemies
merely by glancing at them
Let us ask river-born Sāgaragā-suta Bhīṣma
how he can be killed.

57 If you question him,
he cannot but speak the truth.
Let us ask the Pitāmaha
the way he can be killed.

58 We will go to the old son of Śāntanu,
Bhīṣma,
and use his advice
as the basis of our strategy."

59 Having decided on their plan,
the Pāṇḍava brothers,
accompanied by Vasudeva's valiant son
Krishna,

60 Leaving behind their armour and weapons,
went to Bhīṣma's tent.
Entering, they *praṇāma-ed*
the Pitāmaha.

61 Mahārāja, offering pujā-respect
to the bull-brave Bharata
by touching his feet with their heads,
they sought his protection.

62 Mahā-muscled Bhīṣma, Kaurava Pitāmaha,
said to them:
"*Svāgatam!* Welcome, Vāṛṣṇeya-Krishna!
Welcome, Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!

63 Welcome, Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira!
And welcome,
Bhīma, Nakula and Sahadeva!
What is your pleasure?

64 Ask anything
except that I fight for you.
I will do it gladly,
no matter how difficult."
Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma said this affectionately,
repeating it,

65 And rājā Yudhiṣṭhira cheerfully asked,
"You who know all,
tell us: how can we win
and enjoy our kingdom?

66 *Prabhu*! Lord! How can this impossible dilemma
be forever resolved?
Tell me this. And tell me also
how you may be killed.

67 How can we succeed in overcoming you
on the field?
There seems to be no weakness in you,
O valiant one.

68 O mahā-muscled foe-destroyer,
as you annihilate cavalry,
chariot-heroes and elephant-riders,
you dazzle like a sun in your chariot.

70 As you spread terror among the ranks
of the Pāṇḍavas,
there is no one with the courage
to confront you.

71 My massive army is daily
getting decimated by you.
Tell me: how can you be beaten,
how can we regain our kingdom?

72 Pitāmaha! How can I save my soldiers
from further bloodshed?
Tell me all this." The Pāṇḍavas' ancestor
said to the Pāṇḍavas:

73 "Sons of Kuntī, you cannot win
if I live.
You know everything.
You should know this is true.

74 When I am killed on the battlefield,
you will win.
So if you want a quick victory,
kill me quickly.

75 I give you permission, sons of Kuntī:
attack me!
It is lucky for you that have realised
the truth

76 That when I am killed,
the Kauravas also are finished.
Proceed, then!" "Tell us how,"
said Yudhiṣṭhira.

77 "Because you when angered
are like rod-wielding Yama himself,
we can kill thunderbolt-wielding Indra,
Varuna, Yama,

78 But you cannot be harmed
even by gods and anti-gods,
led by Indra." "You are right, Pāṇḍava,"
said Bhīṣma,

79 "I cannot be harmed by gods and anti-gods,
led by Indra,
so long as I use my weapons
in the war.

80 But I am easy prey to mahā-chariot-heroes
if I lay down my weapons.
Anyone who puts away
his weapons,
one who stumbles, whose flag is shredded,
armour destroyed,

81 Who runs away from battle,
who is stricken with panic,
who says 'I am yours', a woman,
or anyone
sporting a feminine name,
or who has only one son,

82 Or a low-born scoundrel –
it does not please me to fight them.
O Indra-among-rājās,
listen to the vow I took:

83 'I will not fight anyone
flying an inauspicious banner.'
O rājā! In your ranks
is Drupada's mahā-chariot-hero son

84 Śikhaṇḍin, who is irascible, valiant,
and accomplished.
He was born woman
but underwent a sex-change.

85 You know very well
how all this took place.
Tell Arjuna to place Śikhaṇḍin
in front of him,

86 And attack me
with skilfully sharpened arrows.
Seeing the inauspicious banner
of the female Śikhaṇḍin,

87 I will not strike back,
though I am well-armed with arrows.
Let Pāṇḍava Dhanañjaya-Arjuna then
seize his chance

88 And pin me down with his shafts,
O bull-brave Bharata.
I see no one in the three worlds
who can kill me

89 Except Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
or mahā-fortune-favoured Kirshna himself.
So, arrange to have some inauspicious person
or other,

90 With bow and arrow, shielding
dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
who will then assault me –
and victory is yours.

91 Do this, Yudhiṣṭhira, O vow-keeping king!
You will then
be able to rout all Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons
in battle."

92 Paying their respects to mahātmā Bhīṣma,
the Pāṇḍavas
returned to their camp with Bhīṣma's advice
(continued Sañjaya).

93 Bhīṣma had made up his mind
to leave the world.
Arjuna, depressed and ashamed,
said to Krishna:

94 "Mādhava-Krishna,
how can I fight the guru of the Kauravas,
an old and saintly man
of unsurpassed intelligence and discrimination?

95 When I was a child, Vāsudeva-Krishna,
I would often climb into his lap,
and soil the robe of the mahātmā
with my dusty body.

96 Gadāgaja-Krishna, when I was a boy,
I would climb into his lap
and call the father of my mahātmā father Pāṇḍu
'father',

97 And he would say, 'O Bharata!
Not your father, but your father's father.'
How can I kill him now,
he who treated me so?

98 Let him destroy my army.
I refuse to fight mahātmā Bhīṣma.
I do not care whether I win,
I do not care whether I die.
What do you think, Krishna?

99 Krishna! I know Sanātana Dharma.
How can I, knowing what is Sanātana Dharma,
kill my own Pitāmaha
who has laid down his arms?"

100 "Jiṣṇu-Arjuna," said Krishna,
"you made a vow to kill Bhīṣma.
How can you back out of it now
without violating Kṣatriya-dharma?

101 Topple this fierce-in-battle Kṣatriya
out of his chariot.
Unless you do so, Pārtha-Arjuna,
you will never see victory.

102 For the gods have already ordained
that Bhīṣma must enter Yama's realm.
What the gods have decided, will happen.
It cannot be otherwise, Pārtha-Arjuna.

103 Not even thunderbolt-wielding Indra
can humble Bhīṣma,
for he is like Antaka-Death himself with gaping mouth.
But you can.

104 Calm yourself
Kill Bhīṣma.
And listen to these words of mine
which long ago were spoken to Śakra-Indra
by mahā-intelligent Bṛhaspati:

105 'One is permitted to kill an old man,
or a man older than oneself,
or a man who has all the virtues –
in self-defence.'

106 This is the everlasting dharma of Kṣatriyas:
to fight, to protect their subjects,
to perform *yajñas* –
without selfish motivation."

107 "It must be that Śikhaṇḍin took birth
as the cause of Bhīṣma's death,"
said Arjuna,
"for why should Bhīṣma lay down his arms
as soon as he sees Śikhaṇḍin?

108 It must be right then, I think,
to let Śikhaṇḍin face Bhīṣma
by placing him in front of me
and so kill Bhīṣma.

109 I will direct my arrows to divert
the brilliant bowmen of the enemy
while Śikhaṇḍin attacks Bhīṣma.

110 I have heard Bhīṣma say:
'I will never harm Śikhaṇḍin
who was born a girl
and only later turned into a man'."

111 This decision of Arjuna's regarding Bhīṣma
so delighted Krishna
and the Pāṇḍavas
that they horripilated.

112 Their minds made up, the bull-brave Pāṇḍavas,
with Krishna, with Bhīṣma's permission,
returned to their tents,
where they rested.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-EIGHT

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"What was Śikhaṇḍin's attack tactic?
And Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma's against the Pāṇḍavas?
Tell me, Sañjaya."

2 As soon as the sun rose (Sañjaya replied),
the Pāṇḍavas
with the noise of drums and *mṛdaṅgas*
and mini-drums,

3 With curd-white conches blaring
all around them,
stationed Śikhaṇḍin in front,
and marched to battle.

4 Their battle-formation was formidable,
O lord of the world,
and Śikhaṇḍin, mahārāja,
was prominently in front.

5 Bhīma and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
were the protectors of his chariot-wheels.
Guarding the rear were Draupadī's sons
and Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu.

6 The mahā-chariot-heroes Sātyaki and Cekitāna
protected Abhimanyu;
behind them was Dhṛṣṭadyumna
protected by the Pāñcālas.

7 O bull-brave Bharata! Then came rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
with his twin brothers
Nakula and Sahadeva,
screaming their lion-roaring war-cries.

8 Then came Virāṭa with an army
of his own soldiers,
and following him, O mahā-muscled one,
was king Drupada.

9 The five Kekaya princes, O Bharata,
and valiant Dhṛṣṭaketu
comprised the rear protection
of the Pāṇḍava force.

10 With their mahā-battle-array
systematically laid out,
the strategically in an all-or-death attack
charged at Bhīṣma.

11 The Kauravas also advarced
to face the Pāṇḍavas
after placing the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma
at their head.

12 Protected by your sons,
supremely mahā-powerful Bhīṣma
marched against the Pāṇḍava force.
Behind him
came Droṇa
and Droṇa's mahā-powerful son Aśvatthāman.

13 Next came Bhagadatta with a huge force
of war-elephants,
followed by the two heroes,
Kṛpa and Kṛtavarman.

14 He was followed by the Kāmboja-rājā
Sudakṣiṇa,
Jayatsena of Magadrha, Subala's son Śakuni,
and Bṛhadbala.

15 O Bharata! A massive force of brilliant bowmen,
all of them of royal blood,
under the command of Suśarmā,
protected the Kaurava rear.

16 Every day Bhīṣma re-arrayed his soldiers
in different battle-formations
wuch as Piśāca, Rākṣasa,
and Asura.

17 A gory clash occurred between your soldiers,
O rājā,
and the Pāṇḍavas, swelling the populations
of Yama's realm.

18 With Śikhaṇḍin at their head,
Arjuna and the other Pāṇḍavas advanced,
shooting fiery arrows
at Bhīṣma.

19 Many of your soldiers, bleeding profusely
from the wounds
sustained by the impact of Bhīma's arrows,
expired.

20 Nakula, Sahadeva and the mahā-chariot-hero
Sātyaki
advanced against your soldiers,
expertly harassing them.

21 Your soldeirs, reeling under the attacks,
O bull-brave Bharata,
were unable to resist
the fierce arrow-showers.

22 Wounded, crushed and humiliated
by the mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍavas,
your soldiers fled in all directions,
in complete disarray.

23 There was no one to save them
from the concerted attack
of the Pāṇḍavas and the Sṛñjaya bowmen,
O bull-brave Bharata.

24 "But how did valiant Bhīṣma react, Sañjaya,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"when he saw the Pāṇḍava brothers
decimating my soldiers?

25 O blameless Sañjaya! Tell me how
the foe-crushing hero Bhīṣma
replied to the Pāṇḍavas
and killed the Somakas."

26 Mahārāja (said Sañjaya), listen to me,
I will tell you
what your *pitā* did against the Pāṇḍavas
and Sṛñjayas.

27 The brave Pāṇḍavas advanced confidently,
O elder brother of Pāṇḍu,
convinced of their ability
to rout your army.

28 But it was impossible for Bhīṣma
to tolerate
the massacre of your soldiers, horses,
and elephants.

29 Deluging the Pāṇḍavas,
the Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas.
with long-stremmed shafts,
calf-toothed and crescent arrows,

30 Bhīṣma prepared to fight to the death.
He repulsed, O rājā,
the five excellent mahā-chariot-hero
Pāṇḍava brothers

31 Who were assiduously showering the field
with arrows.
With various weapons
and missiles fired with precision,

32 He contained their advance
and killed their horses and elephants.
Uncharioting chariot-heroes,
O rājā, bull-brave

33 Bhīṣma toppled horse-riders,
and overthrew foe-defeating warriors
on elephant-backs. Bhīṣma spread panic
among the enemy.

34 Like the anti-gods attacking
thunderbolt-wielding Indra,
the Pāṇḍavas chased
the elusive mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma.

35 Bhīṣma's awe-instilling presence
seemed to be everywhere,
shooting arrows as fatal
as Sakra-Indra's fierce thunderbolt.

36 His bow, which looked like the rainbow
of Sakra-Indra,
seemed permanently pulled
in a fully taut maṇḍala-circle.

37 Your sons witnessed Bhīṣma's stupendous feats,
O lord of the world,
and marvelled, and profusely pūjā-praised
their Pitāmaha.

38 Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons stared at your *pitā*
As they stood on the field of battle,

39 As the gods stare at the Dānava antigod
named Vipracitti,
because Bhīṣma looked like gaping-jawed
Antaka-Death personified.

40 On the tenth day of battle,
Bhīṣma's arrows consumed
Śikhaṇḍin's chariot-heroes
like fire sweeping through a forest.

41 Śikhaṇḍin fired three arrows straight
at the chest of Bhīṣma,
who looked like fierce Antaka-Kāla
or a virulent snake.

42 Wounded by Śikhaṇḍin,
Bhīṣma glared at him angrily
and at the same time condescendingly,
and smilingly said:

43 "You can carry on targeting me.
I will not retaliate.
To me you remain the girl Śikhaṇḍinī
that the Creator made."

44 These words of Bhīṣma sent anger
coursing through Śikhaṇḍin
and, licking the corners of his mouth,
he replied:

45 "Mahā-muscled hero, I know you,
you ruin of the the Kṣatriyas!
I have heard of your duel
with Jāmadagni-Paraśurāma.

46 I have heard much
about your god-like prowess.
In spite of that,
I choose to fight you today.

47 Narottama! Finest-of-men! I will today do something
to please the Pāṇḍavas and myself.
Puruṣa-sattama! O most marvellous man!
I challenge you! Fight with me today!

48 I vow before you today
that I shall kill you!
Now that you know,
do whatever you like.

49 Always-victorious Bhīṣma!
Fight me, or don't fight me –
you die today. Take a long last look
at the world."

50 Śikhaṇḍin shot five knotted arrows
at Bhīṣma
who was still smarting
under his wordy arrows.

51 Mahā-chariot-hero Savyasācī-Arjuna
heard the vow of Śikhaṇḍin
and urged his chariot forward,
and shouted to Śikhaṇḍin:

52 "Forge ahead and attack fearful Bhīṣma,
I shall cover you
and prevent their warriors
from reaching your chariot.

53 O mahā-muscled one! There is no way
mahā-powerful Bhīṣma can harm you.
Attack him now!
Now is the time!

54 If you return without killing Bhīṣma,
O gracious one,
you will expose yourself and me
to the mockery of the world.

55 Fight! See that no ridicule falls
on our heads.
Fight hard, and see that you kill
the Pitāmaha.

56 Depend on me, O mahā-powerful one,
to protect you
from the chariot-heroes of the Kauravas.
But kill Bhīṣma.

57 Droṇa, Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman, Kṛpa, Duryodhana,
Citrasena, Vikarṇa, Jayadratha of the Sindhus,

58 The Avanti princes Vinda and Anuvinda, Sudakṣiṇa
of Kāmboja,
Mahā-powerful Bhagadatta, ruler of Magadha,

59 Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas, the rākṣasa Alambuṣa,
The Trigarta-rājā Suśarmā and other mahā-chariot-
heroes –

60 I will contain all these heroes, as the shores
Of the *makara*-filled ocean contain ocean-breakers.

61 I will keep the Kaurava mahā-powerful warriors at bay
Though they attack unitedly. Your task is to kill the
Pitāmaha!"

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-NINE

1 "How did Śikhaṇḍin, angered beyond control,
launch his attack
on Gaṅgā's son dharmātmā Pitāmaha Bhīṣma?"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

2 "Who were the mahā-chariot-heroes
who covered Śikhaṇḍin
with brandished weapons,
anticipating total victory?

3 What were the tactics of Śāntanu's son,
mahā-valiant Bhīṣma,
to combat the Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas
on the tenth day?

4 I cannot conceive of Bhīṣma
killed by Śikhaṇḍin.
Did his chariot shatter,
did his bow disintegrate?"

5 O bull-brave Bharata! His chariot did not shatter,
nor did his bow disintegrate
(Sañjaya replied) as he battled
with his enemies,

6 Slaughtering them
with swarms of swift knotted arrows.
Hundreds of thousands of mahā-chariot-heroes
of your army,

7 O rājā, countless huge-tusked elephants,
and glitteringly-caparisoned horses
advanced to attack under the leadership
of Bhīṣma.

8 Keeping his vow in mind, O Kaurava,
Bhīṣma continued
his unremitting massacre of the forces
of the Pāṇḍavas.

9 The Pāñcālas reeled under the onslaught
of Bhīṣma's attack,
and thousands of Pāṇḍava warriors perished
by his arrows.

10 On the tenth day, Bhīṣma spread havoc
in the enemy ranks
with his hundreds of thousands
of sharp arrows.

11 Listen, Pāṇḍu's elder brother!
Impossible for the Pāṇḍavas to defeat
mahā-bowman Bhīṣma who resembled
noose-carrying Antaka-Death personified.

12 Mahārāja, then ambidexterous Savyasācī Arjuna,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
invincible doer-of-dreadful-deeds
Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
advanced, to the wide-eyed wonder
of the chariot-heroes.

13 Like Kāla himself,
Arjuna swept through the field,
roaring like a lion, twanging his bow,
shooting arrows.

14 Stupefied by his war-cries, O bull-brave Bharata,
your warriors fled in panic,
like deer fleeing in maha-fear
from a lion, O rājā.

15 Seeing Pāṇḍava Arjuna dominating the field,
and his soldiers scattering in fear,
Duryodhana worriedly
said to Bhīṣma:

16 "There they are – Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
in a white-horsed chariot,
with Krishna driving, consuming my soldiers
like fire a forest.

17 See, Gaṅgā's son, O finest of warriors,
how my warriors
are massacred on all sides
by Pāṇḍu's son.

18 Like a herdsman beating
a herd of cattle in a wood,
Arjuna smites the soldiers
in my army.

19 Demoralised and mutilated by the arrows
of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
my soldiers are easy victims
for Bhīma's attacks.

20 Sātyaki, Cekitāna, Mādrī's twin sons
Nakula and Sahadeva,
and Abhimanyu
are harassing my soldiers.

21 Brave Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
are also spreading havoc in my ranks
in this mahā-battle.

22 Bharata! I see no hope
for my traumatised mahā-chariot-heroes,
who are wavering
on the battlefield,

23 Other than you who equals the gods.
O tiger-among men,
challenge the Pāṇḍavas, stay the rout,
and save my soldiers."

24 Mahārāja, your *pitā* Devavrata-Bhīṣma
listened to Duryodhana,
reflected for a while
before making up his mind,

25 And then consoled him with these words:
"Lord of the world, Duryodhana,
listen patiently
to what I am saying.

26 Even before the war began, I promised you,
O mahā-powerful one,
that I will kill ten thousand
mahātmā Kṣatriyas

27 Every day, after which I will stop fighting
for the day.
O bull-brave Bharata, I have kept my word
without fail.

28 Today, O mahā-powerful one,
I will perform a mahā-feat.
Either I die today,
or I kill the Pāṇḍavas today.

29 Today I will pay back the debt I owe you
by perishing in battle for you,
for I have eaten your food, O rājā,
O tiger-among-men."

30 Saying this; difficult-to-defeat Bhīṣma,
finest of the Bharatas,
shot arrows at the Kṣatriya warriors
of the Pāṇḍava army.

31 The Pāṇḍavas struck back at Gaṅgeya-Bhīṣma,
the bull-brave Bharata
who stood in the centre
like an enraged, poisonous serpent.

32 On the tenth day of battle, O rājā,
O Kaurava descendant,
Bhīṣma displayed his śakti
by killing thousands of soldiers.

33 Like the sun sucking up moisture,
Bhīṣma drained away
the energies of the Pāñcāla
mahā-chariot-heroes.

34 Felling ten thousand war-elephants
of amazing swiftness
and ten thousand horses and their riders,
O mahārāja,

35 And a hundred thousand soldiers,
finest-of-men Bhīṣma
dazzled like a massive conflagration
with no trace of smoke.

36 No Pāṇḍava hero had the courage
to look at him
as he blazed like the sun
in the northern solstice.

37 The Pāṇḍava mahā-bowmen then decided,
in conjunction
with the Sṛñjaya maha-chariot-heroes,
to rush Bhīṣma.

38 Battling against huge odds,
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
looked like the mahā-mountain Meru
ringed by dark clouds.

39 Your son Duryodhana rushed to protect
Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma
within a defensive circle.
A gory clash resulted.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-TEN

1 O rājā ! Witnessing Bhīṣma's display of valour
on the field
(continued Sañjaya), Arjuna said to Śikhaṇḍin:
"Confront the Pitāmaha.

2 Today you have no reason
to fear Bhīṣma,
for I will use my arrows to topple him
from his chariot."

3 Śikhaṇḍin listened attentively to Arjuna,
O bull-brave Bharata,
and decided to proceed, as instructed by Pārtha,
against the Pitāmaha.

4 Dhṛṣṭadyumna and the mahā-chariot-hero
Saubhadra-Abhimanyu,
inspired by Arjuna's assurance,
advanced to attack Bhīṣma.

5 The two elderly heroes Drupada and Virata,
with Kuntibhoja,
in your son's presence deployed heavy armour
against Bhīṣma,

6 O lord of the world! Nakula and Sahadeva,
and Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
and a host of other lesser-known
Pāṇḍava heroes,

7 Acting on Pārtha-Arjuna's assurance,
marched against Bhīṣma.
Against that force
of valiant mahā-chariot-heroes,

8 The Kauravas of your army reacted powerfully.
Let me explain.
Mahārāja, Citrasena confronted
noble Cekitāna

9 Who was irritating Bhīṣma
like a tiger-club attacking a bull.
Mahārāja Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
harassing Bhīṣma,

10 Was intercepted by Kṛtavarman
on the battlefield.
Furious Bhīma, bursting with passion
to kill Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma,

11 Was checked, mahārāja,
by Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas.
Brave Nakula,
who was firing volleys of arrows,

12 Was blocked by Vikarṇa
intent on protecting Bhīṣma.
O rājā, rushing towards Bhīṣma's chariot,
Sahadeva

13 Was intercepted
by Śaradvat's angry son Kṛpa.
The mahā-powerful rākṣasa son
of Bhīma

14 Was blocked effectively
by alert and powerful Durmukha.
Sātyaki was intercepted
by your son Duryodhana
as soon as he charged furiously
at valiant Bhīṣma.

15 Mahārāja, the Kāmboja-rājā Sudakṣiṇa
successfully foiled
an attempt by Abhimanyu
to damage Bhīṣma's chariot.

16 Aśvatthāman, livid with range, O Bharata,
rushed to contain
the advance of the elderly Virāṭa
and Drupada.

17 As Dharmaputra Yudhiṣṭhira marched
against Bhīṣma,
his deadly advance was intercepted
by Bharadvāja's son Droṇa.

18 Mahārāja, in his plan of placing Śikhaṇḍin
in front,
Arjuna, dazzling with the brilliance
of all ten directions,

19 Was challenged by Duḥśāsana,
the mahā-bowman.
Many other warriors stopped
the mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍavas

20 As they strove to implement
their Bhīṣma-strategy.
Infuriated Dhṛṣṭadyumna repeatedly
addressed his soldiers:

21 "Concentrate on mahā-powerful Bhīṣma.
Do not fear.
The Kuru-delighter Arjuna
is also attacking Bhīṣma.

22 Even Vāsava-Indra dare not face Arjuna
in combat –
and Bhīṣma, though brave, O my brave men,
is feeble and on death's brink."

23 These words of their general cheered
the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes,
and they excitedly
attacked Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma.

24 The soldiers of your army
confidently contained
the Pāṇḍava onslaught that rolled
like a huge ocean.

25 It left your bull-brave warriors undismayed.
Then, mahāraja,
the mahā-charot-hero Duḥśāsana,
with total fearlessness,

26 Eager to protect the life of Bhīṣma,
faced Dhanañjaya Arjuna.
But the brave Pāṇḍava,
rushing at Bhīṣma,

27 Harassed your mahā-chariot-hero sons.
O lord of the world!
We witnessed wonderful happenings
on the field –

28 Reaching near Duḥśāsana's chariot,
Pārtha-Arjuna could proceed no further!
Like the shores containing
the ocean,

29 Your son Duḥśāsana prevented enraged Arjuna
from advancing.
Both were invincible chariot-heroes,
O Bharata descendant,

30 Like the sun and the moon, O Bharata,
in dazzle and splendour,
each obsessed with a commitment
to kill the other.

31 Duḥśāsana was like Vṛtra,
Arjuna like Indra.
They fought like Śakra-Indra
fighting the anti-god Maya.
Mahārāja, Duḥśāsana wounded Arjuna
with three arrows,

32 And Vasudeva's son Krishna
with twenty.
Seeing Vārṣṇeya-Krishna afflicted,
Arjuna in a burst of anger

33 Shot a hundred *nārāca*-arrows
at Duḥśāsana
which pierced his armour
and sipped his life-blood,

34 O rājā, as if they were *pannaga*-serpents
at a water-hole.
Duḥśāsana, not outdone,
shot five arrows at Arjuna
which sped fiercely, O excellent Bharata,
and struck Arjuna's forehead.

35 Mahārāja! With the three arrows jutting
from his forehead,
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna looked like Mount Meru
with its three peaks.

36 Wounded by this feat of your son,
the mahā-bowman Pārtha-Arjuna
looked as lovely
as a flowering flame-of-the-forest.

37 Like incensed Rāhu oppressing the moon
on the fifteenth day of the bright fortnight,
the enraged Pāṇḍava Arjuna oppressed
your son Duḥśāsana,

38 Who retaliated, O lord of the world,
by wounding valiant Arjuna
with stone-sharpened arrows fitted
with *kaṅka*-bird feathers.

39 And Pārtha-Arjuna replied by shattering
the bow of Duḥśāsana
and smashing his chariot
with exceedingly sharp arrows.

40 Duḥśāsana fitted another bow and,
standing in front of Bhīṣma,
he struck Arjuna's chest and arms
with twentyfive shafts.

41 This incensed Arjuna so intensely, mahārāja,
that he pinned Duḥśāsana down
with arrows resembling
Yama's horrendous rod.

42 But Duḥśāsana was not perturbed.
Though Pārtha-Arjuna did his best,
Duḥśāsana baffled him.
A wonderful feat!

43 Duḥśāsana again attempted to break
Arjuna's attack –
and this so infuriated Pārtha-Arjuna
that he released

44 Stone-sharpened gold-feathered arrows
at Duḥśāsana.
Mahārāja, the arrows glided into the body
of mahātmā Duḥśāsana

45 Like swans in the waters of a lake,
O Bharata.
Grievously wounded by the Pāṇḍava mahātmā,
your son

46 Evaded Arjuna, and drove up closer
to Bhīṣma,
who was like an island
in that ocean of pain and peril.

47 O lord of the world! Your son Duḥśāsana
recovered quickly;
with remarkable fortitude, prowess,
and shrewd initiative,

48 Mahā-bodied Duḥśāsana shot arrows at Arjuna
like Puraṁdara-Indra blocking Vṛtra.
The shafts pierced Arjuna deeply,
but he remained calm.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-ELEVEN

1 As armour-clad Sātyaki advanced
against Bhīṣma,
he was opposed by Ṛṣyśṛṅga's rākṣasa son,
the mahā-bowman Alambuṣa.

2 O Bharata rājā! This so infuriated Sātyaki
that, mock-smiling,
he wounded the rākṣasa
with nine sharp arrows.

3 O Indra-among-rājās! The incensed rākṣasa also,
with nine arrows
harassed the hero-annihilating grandson of Śini,
Mādhava-Sātyaki.

4 Mādhava-Sātyaki,
the hero-annihilating Śini-descendant,
reacted with a fresh burst
of deadly arrows at the rākṣasa.

5 The mahā-muscled rākṣasa Alambuṣa
retaliated with sharp arrows
and, wounding Sātyaki,
screamed his war-cry.

6 Though reeling under the rākṣasa's attack,
    Sātyaki collected his energies,
smiled, and shouted his own
    reverberating war-cry.

7 His anger roused, Bhagadatta fired
    polished arrows
at Mādhava-Sātyaki, like a mahout
    goad-piercing an elephant.

8 Ignoring the rākṣasa,
    the chariot-hero Sātyaki
fired flat arrows at the Prāgjyotiṣa-ruler
    Bhagadatta.

9 With a knife-edged broad-head *bhalla*-arrow,
    skilfully fired,
Bhagadatta sliced off the mahā-bow
    of Mādhava-Sātyaki.

10 But the foe-crushing hero Sātyaki
    fitted another tough bow
and harassed Bhagadatta with a fresh volley
    of sharp arrows.

11 Seriously hurt, the mahā-bowman
    Bhagadatta,
licking the corners of his mouth,
    hurled a gold and-gemmed *śakti*,

12 As swift and fierce as the rod of Yama,
    a *śakti*-missile
which sped, from the momentum
    of Bhagadatta's throw,

13 Towards Sātyaki who disintegrated it
    in mid-flight, O rājā.
Like a mahā-meteor that has lost
    its lustre,

14 The *śakti*-missile crashed on the ground.
    Seeing the *śakti* shattered,
Duryodhana encircled Sātyaki
    with a chariot contingent.

15 Observing the circular containment
of the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,
Duryodhana said excitedly
to his brothers;

16 "Try your best, O Kauravas!
See that Sātyaki
does not escape alive from this attack
by our chariots.

17 With Sātyaki dead, I will consider
all the Pāṇḍavas as good as dead."
"It will be done,"
said the mahā-chariot-heroes,

18 And, ranged in front of Bhīṣma,
they attacked Sātyaki, Meanwhile,
Abhimanyu, who had driven up
to kill Bhīṣma,
was successfully blocked
by the rājā of Kāmboja.

19 O rājā! O ruler! Ārjuni-Abhimanyu
harassed him with flat arrows,
and wounded him
with sixty four shafts.

20 Sudakṣiṇa, determined to protect Bhīṣma,
fired five arrows at Abhimanyu,
and wounded his charioteer
with nine more.

21 When foe-crushing Śikhaṇḍin tried to slip past them
to attack Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma,
the combat between the two splendid heroes
intensified.

22 The two elderly mahā-chariot-heroes
Virāṭa and Drupada
angrily mounted a joint attack
on Bhīṣma.

23 It was then that Aśvatthāman, incensed,
entered the fray,
and a fierce fight followed between him and them,
O Bharata.

24 O foe-crushing king! With ten *bhalla*-arrows
Virāṭa wounded
the son of Droṇa, Aśvatthāman,
the brilliant mahā-bowman.

25 Drupada also fired three arrows that pierced
the guru's son Aśvatthāman.
Continuing his attack
on the two mahā-powerful adversaries,

26 Aśvatthāman harassed them
with volleys of arrows –
but could not check their advance
against Bhīṣma.

27 It was then that we witnessed
a mahā-marvellous feat
by the two old warriors –
they shattered all the arrows of Aśvatthāman.

28 Śaradvat's son Kṛpa chose to block the attack
of Sahadeva on Bhīṣma
like one musth elephant blocking another
in a forest.

29 Kṛpa quickly shrouded Pāṇḍu's son,
the mahā-chariot-hero Sahadeva,
and wounded him with a volley
of seventy gold-feathered arrows.

30 Mādrī's son Sahadeva retaliated
by slicing his bow
with sharp arrows, and wounding him
with nine more.

31 Picking up another massive bow
of flexible resilience,
Kṛpa wounded Sahadeva in the chest
with ten shafts,

32 Because he was eager to protect Bhīṣma
in battle.
Pāṇḍu's son Sahadeva,
equally roused and eager, O rājā,

33 To kill Bhīṣma, in fierce anger
shot an arrow
that pierced Kṛpa's chest.
A fearful and gory combat!

34 Infuriated foe-tormentor Vikarṇa,
intent on rescuing mahā-powerful Bhīṣma,
fired sixty arrows that wounded
Pāṇḍu's son Nakula.

35 Pierced by the shafts of your intelligent son
Vikarṇa,
Nakula retaliated with sixtyseven
of his own.

36 Those two foe-crushing tiger-like heroes
fought over Bhīṣma
like two snorting bulls
in a shed full of cows.

37 To protect Bhīṣma, powerful Durmukha
faced Ghaṭotkaca,
the rākṣasa who was massacring a path
through your army.

38 O rājā! Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca,
in a fury of anger,
paralysed foe-crushing Durmukha in the chest
with a curved arrow.

39 But Durmukha only smiled and,
wounding Ghaṭotkaca
with sixty smooth arrows,
he screamed his war-cry.

40 In the same way, mahā-chariot-hero Kṛtavarman
effectively blocked the progress
of chariot-expert Dhṛṣṭadyumna
as he advanced to kill Bhīṣma.

41 Kṛtavarman wounded Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with five steel shafts;
then, firing fifty more, he shouted,
"Stop! Stop!"

42 Mahā-muscled Kṛtavarman got the upper hand
on mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna
who retaliated by attacking Kṛtavarman, O rājā,
with nine

43 Specially-sharpened, *kaṅ ka*-bird feathered
radiant arrows.
They fought a maha-duel
over Bhīṣma,

44 A duel that resembled the clash between
Mahendra-Indra and Vṛtra.
Meanwhile, intercepting Bhīma about to attack Bhīṣma,
the mahā-chariot-hero

45 Bhūriśravas shouted, "Stop! Stop!"
Saumadatti-Bhūriśravas
wounded Bhīma in the middle
of his chest

46 With a long-stemmed *nārāca*-arrow.
Standing there,
with the arrow protruding from his chest,
valiant Bhīma

47 Looked as splendid as the Krauñca hill
embedded with Skanda's *śakti*-spear.
O finest of kings!
The two heroes shot sun-bright arrows.

48 At each other, in a paroxysm
of mutual bull-brave destruction.
Planning to kill Bhīṣma, Bhīma battled
with mahā-chariot-hero Bhūriśravas

49 While Bhūriśravas, sworn to protect Bhīṣma,
blocked his efforts –
both outdoing each other
in heroic feats.

50 Seeing Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira leading
a mahā-army against Bhīṣma,
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
expertly intercepted him.

51 Hearing the rumble of Droṇa's chariot
that sounded, O honour-bestowing rājā,
like the thunder-cloud Parjanya,
the Prabhadraka soldiers trembled.

52 O rājā! Halted by Droṇa, the mahā-army
of Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira struggled,
but failed to move
even one step forward.

53 O lord of men! Your son Citrasena
blocked heroic Cekitāna
as he advanced to do battle
with the Kuru patriarch Bhīṣma.

54 O Bharata descendant! Protecting Bhīṣma,
the mahā-chariot-hero Citrasena,
valiant and nimble,
grappled with Cekitana;

55 Similarly, Cekitāna fought with equal intensity.
The duel
that resulted when they clashed
was mahā-horrific.

56 Though repeatedly attacked
by your son Duḥśāsana,
Arjuna routed his soldiers
and started massacring them.

57 But Duḥśāsana was determined, O Bharata,
not to let Arjuna harm Bhīṣma,
and he continued to repulse
the attacks of Arjuna.

58 Nor did Pārtha-Arjuna, O rājā,
spare Duḥśāsana,
containing him with volley upon volley
of straight-speeding arrows.

59 When your warriors saw Duḥśāsana
harassed by those arrows
of limitlessly energetic Pārtha-Arjuna,
they were sorely troubled.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-TWELVE

1 Heroic, mahā-bowman, strong as a musth elephant,
Amazingly self-controlled, penetrator of enemy ranks,

2 Able to lift, string, and aim a bow with ease,
The mahā-powerful-finest-of-men began harassing
the Pāṇḍavas.

3 Such was valiant Droṇa, able to distinguish
Auspicious from inauspicious, who said to
Aśvatthāman:

4 "Today, my son,
the mahā-powerful son of Kuntī
will do his uttermost
to attack and kill Bhīṣma.

5 My arrows are slipping,
my bow is unsteady,
my weapons seem to disobey me,
my mind is not bent on cruelty.

6 Birds and animals scream inauspiciously
around me,
vultures circle and swoop
on the Bharata army.

7 The sun has lost its dazzle,
the points of the horizon are blood-red,
the earth trembles
and whines.

8 *Kaṅka*-birds, vultures and *balāka*-cranes
screech needlessly,
jackals howl inauspiciously.
foreboding mahā-disaster.

9 Giant meteors
swirl out of the sun-maṇḍala,
the Parigha constellation
surrounds the sun.

10 The sun and the moon
look fearful,
foreboding the physical ruin
of the warring rājās.

11 The images of deities in the god-abode
of the Indra-among-Kauravas king Dhṛtarāṣṭra
shiver and dance
and laugh and weep.

12 The planets move in orbit
keeping the sun inauspiciously to their left,
and the *bhagavān* moon rises topsy-turvy,
horns pointing downwards.

13 The bodies of the kings in Dhṛtarāṣṭra's army
have lost their lustre;
the armour of these Indra-among-men kings
does not even shine.

14 I hear the mahā-din of the warring armies,
the blare of the Pañcajanya conch
and the twang of the Gāṇḍīva bow.

15 Bībhatsu-Arjuna will ignore the other warriors
and seek out Bhīṣma –
for Arjuna possesses the most remarkable weapons.

16 O mahā-powerful one! The pores of my body
horripilate,
my mind is paralysed with anxiety,
I keep thinking of the impending duel
between Arjuna and Bhīṣma.

17 Placing malice-motivated Śikhaṇḍin in front of him,
Pārtha-Arjuna advances to kill Bhīṣma,
Using that crooked Pāñcāla prince as his shield.

18 Bhīṣma's vow was:
I will not kill Śikhaṇḍin.
The Creator made him female,
by chance he turned male.

19 Drupada's mahā-powerful son Śikhaṇḍin
sports an inauspicious sign in his flag.
Bhīṣma will never strike him.

20 My mind is filled with anxiety
when I see Pārtha-Arjuna charging angrily
at the aged Kaurava patriarch.

21 Yudhiṣṭhira's wrath,
the clash between Arjuna and Bhīṣma,
my use of varied weapons in battle –
these bode ill for all.

22 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna is
intelligent
strong
valiant
expert in weapons
nimble
He shoots arrows straight from far
He knows what is auspicious and inauspicious.

23 He cannot be defeated in battle
even by Vāsava-Indra leading his hosts of gods.
He is energetic, indefatigable, inventive,
he is the finest of fighters.

24 This Pāṇḍava always wins,
he possesses dreadful weapons.
Skirt him, O my firm-vowed son,
and attend directly to Bhīṣma's defence.

25 You will witness today
a horrendous mahā-massacre.
The gold-decorated, auspicious armours of warriors

26 Will be shattered by knotted arrows.
The flags, *tomaras* and bows will be shredded.

27 The shining spears, the dazzling *śakti*-missiles,
the pennants waving on the backs of elephants
will be destroyed by diadem-wearing-Kirīṭin-Arjuna.

28 This is not the time, my son,
to think of one's own safety.
Fight for victory!
Fight for fame!
Keep heaven in mind.

29 You can see Arjuna there
with his ape-emblemed banner
Crossing in his chariot the mahā-fearful ocean of battle
the uncrossable ocean
whose waves are chariots, elephants, and horses.

30 Respect for Brahmins
self-control
charity
tapasyā
mahā-integrity –
these qualities are Yudhiṣṭhira's
whose brothers are Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

31 Powerful Bhīma
Mādrī's twins Nakula and Sahadeva
and who has Vasudeva's son Vārṣṇeya-Krishna
as his lord.

32 The army of ill-minded Duryodhana
is being devastated
by the tapasyā-rooted wrath of Yudhiṣṭhira.

33 There in the distance is Parthā-Arjuna
with Vāsudeva-Krishna to guide him,
ravaging the soldiers of Duryodhana.

34 There is the army trembling
under the attacks of diadem-wearing Arjuna,
like an ocean under a thrashing *timi*-whale.

35 Everywhere chaos and confusion
and agonised cries of 'Hai! Hai!' –
listen to them!
Go, my son, confront the Pāñcāla Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
I will fight Yudhiṣṭhira.

36 Defended by *atiratha*-chariot-heroes,
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira's army-formation
is as difficult to pierce and enter
as the depths of the ocean.

37 Sātyaki, Abhimanyu, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, wolf-waisted
Bhīma,
Nakula and Sahadeva are covering lord-of-men rājā
Yudhiṣṭhira.

38 Blue-skinned like Upendra-Viṣṇu, tall as a mahā-śāla-
tree,
There is Abhimanyu, a second Phālguna-Arjuna,
leading his troops.

39 Prepare your weapons.
Grasp your mahā-bow
And rush into battle against the rājās
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Vṛkodara-Bhīma.

40 Who does not want his dear son
to live for ever?
Yet, with Kṣatriya-dharma in mind,
I order you to fight.

41 There stands Bhīṣma
equal on the field
to Yama god of death
or Varuṇa
as he busily devastates his mahā-fearful foes."

42 Giving this advice to his son, mahārāja,
Bhāradvāja-Droṇa
drove out to do battle
with the army of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-THIRTEEN

1 Bhagadatta, Kṛpa, Śalya, Kṛtavarman,
Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti, Jayadratha of Sindhu,

2 Citrasena, Vikarṇa, Durmarṣaṇa –
These ten warriors concentrated on Bhīmasena.

3 They were supported by soldiers from many lands,
All eager to protect Bhīṣma and win the war, O rājā.

4 Śalya wounded Bhīma with nine arrows,
Kṛtavarman with three, and Kṛpa with nine.

5 O gracious monarch! Citrasena, Vikarṇa and
Bhagadatta –
Each pierced Bhīma with ten arrows.

6 The Sindhu ruler pierced Bhīma with three,
Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti with five each.

7 Durmarṣaṇa wounded him with twenty sharp arrows.
Then, mahārāja, all those rājās, one by one,

8 All your mahā-chariot-hero sons, O Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
Were wounded in the battle by hero-annihilating Bhīma.

9 He checked Śalya with seven, Kṛtavarman with eight,
And with one arrow, O Bharata, shredded Kṛpa's loaded bow.

10 With seven more he severely wounded Kṛpa,
And pierced Vinda and Anuvinda with three arrows each,

11 Durmarṣaṇa with twenty, Citrasena with five,
Vikarṇa with ten and Jayadratha with five.

12 Then, roaring his war-cry, he shot three more at Saindhava-Jayadratha.
Meanwhile, Gautama-Kṛpa picked up another bow

13 And angrily fired ten sharp arrows at Bhīma.
Like a huge elephant gored by a hook,

14 Bhīma screamed in pain on the battlefield.
Mahārāja, valiant Bhīma in a fury of anger
Wounded Gautama-Kṛpa with a barrage of fresh arrows.

15 Next, Saindhava-Jayadratha's horses and charioteer, with three arrows
Were despatched to death by Kāla-Antaka-fierce Bhīma.

16 The mahā-chariot-hero Jayadratha jumped off his chariot
And shot a swarm of sharp arrows at Bhīmasena.

17 O must excellent and gracious Bharata monarch!
With two broad-headed *bhalla*-arrows, Bhīma sliced
The bow of the mahātmā ruler of the Sindhus.

18 His bow shattered, his horses killed, his chariot smashed,
Jayadratha quickly climbed into Citrasena's chariot, O rājā.

19 What marvellous feats were displayed by Pāṇḍava-Bhīma!
O gracious monarch! He harassed the mahā-chariot-heroes with arrows,

20 And in front of all the soldiers unchærioted Jayadratha.
Śalya could not tolerate valiant Bhīma's assault.

21 With hand-forged and hand-sharpened arrows,
Śalya blocked him, shouting "Stop! Stop!

22 Kṛpa, Kṛtavarman, valiant Bhagadatta,
Avanti's Vinda and Anuvinda, Citrasena,

23 Durmarṣaṇa, Vikarṇa, the brave Sindhu-rājā,
All foe-crushing heroes, attacked Bhīma to save
Śalya.

24 Bhīma retaliated with five arrows for each,
Wounding Śalya first with seventy, then with ten arrows.

25 Śalya replied with nine, then with five arrows,
And with a broad-head shaft seriously injured his
charioteer.

26 Seeing his charioteer Viśoka badly hurt, Bhīma
Wounded Śalya first with seventy, then with ten arrows.

27 Bhagadatta, brave Kṛtavarman and other heroes
Were pierced by Bhīma with three arrows each,
After which he roared his war-cry on the battlefield.

28 All these mahā-bowmen, with patient aim, wounded
Bhīma,
Though expert in warfare, with three arrows each.

29 Though grievously hurt by their attacks, mahā-
bowman Bhīma
Stood firm as a mountain in a torrential shower.

30 Then, roused to anger, the mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍava
Mahā-renowned Bhīma pierced Śalya with three
arrows,

31 O rājā, and harassed the Prāgjyotṣa ruler Bhagadatta
With volley upon volley of well-aimed arrows.

32 Then, focusing on the mahātmā warrior Kṛtavarman,
Bhīma dexterously splintered his bow and arrows.

33 Picking up a second bow, Kṛtavarman struck
Vṛkodara-Bhīma
Between his brows with a long-stemmed *nārāca*-
arrow.

34 Wounding Śalya with nine steel arrows, Bhīma
Harassed Bhagadatta with three and Kṛtavarman with eight,

35 And Kṛpa and each of the other chariot-heroes with two.
O rājā! They retaliated with showers of sharp arrows.

36 Though pinned down by the mahā-chariot-heroes' weapons,
Bhīma dominated the field, treating them like grass.

37 The excellent chariot-heroes assailed Bhīma
With hundreds and thousands of sharp arrows.

38 O mahā-minded monarch! The mahā-chariot-hero
Bhagadatta hurled a wind-swift *śakti*
Resplendent with a golden shaft at noble Bhīma.

39 The mahā-muscled rājā of the Sindhus, Jayadratha,
Hurled a lance and a battle-axe at Bhīma.
O rājā! Kṛpa shot a fire-dart, and Śalya an arrow.

40 The other warriors released five arrows each
At Bhīma, all sharpened on stone.

41 The wind-god's son Bhīma, with a razor-arrow,
Sliced Jayadratha's lance, and disintegrated the axe
With three arrows as if it was a sesamum stem.

42 Bhīma pulverised the fire-dart with nine *kaṅka*-feathered shafts,
After which he shredded mahā-chariot-hero Śalya's arrow.

43 He shattered Bhagadatta's *śakti*-missile,
And pounded the other heroes on the battlefield

44 With three arrows each, destroying their weapons.
Then mahā-bowman Bhīma shot three arrows more.

45 In all that mahā-battle's gory confusion came Arjuna.
He saw the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīma

46 Slaughtering his enemies on the battlefield with arrows.
Seeing the two mahātmā sons of Pāṇḍu together,

47 Your bull-brave warriors gave up all hope of victory.
Seeing Bhīma battling, the mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna,

48 Who had come with Śikhaṇḍin as shield to kill Bhīṣma,
Confronted the ten chariot-heroes on the field,
O Bharata.

49 O rājā! All who were engaged in fighting Bhīma –
Bībhatsu-Arjuna attacked them in order to please
Bhīma.

50 It was then the rājā Duryodhana ordered Suśarmā
To advance and wipe out Bhīma and Arjuna:

51 "Hurry, Suśarmā, with a force of crack soldiers
And liquidate Dhanañjaya-Arjuna and wolf-waisted
Bhīma."

52 Obeying the command, the Trigarta-ruler Suśarmā
Launched an offensive against Arjuna and Bhīma,

53 Completely encircling them with thousands of
chariots.
A gory clash took place between Arjuna and his
attackers.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-FOURTEEN

1 Arjuna deluged the energetic mahā-chariot-hero Śalya
With knotted arrows (continued Sañjaya).

2 He assailed Kṛpa and Suśarmā with three arrows each,
And then attacked Prāgjyotiṣa-Bhagadatta and
Saindhava-Jayadratha,

3 Citrasena, Vikarṇa and Kṛtavarman,
O Indra-among-rājās,
And Durmarṣaṇa and the two chariot-heroes from
Avanti –

4 Each with three vulture-feathered arrows.
The chariot-hero Arjuna harassed them incessantly.

5 O Bharata! Pārtha-Arjuna was wounded in the battle
by Jayadratha
(Along with Bhīma) shooting from Citrasena's chariot.

6 The excellent chariot-heroes Śalya and Kṛpa attacked Arjuna
With arrows, mahārāja, that pierced his vital parts.

7 O lord of the world! Your sons urged by their brother Citrasena –
Each fired five swift-speeding sharp arrows

8 And badly wounded Arjuna and Bhīma, O gracious monarch.
The two excellent bull-brave chariot-hero sons of Kuntī

9 Created havoc in the ranks of the Trigartas,
But Suśarmā succeeded in hitting Arjuna with nine arrows.

10 Afflicting the Pāṇḍava mahā-army, he roared his war-cry.
Other brave chariot-heroes pinned Dhanañjaya-Arjuna and Bhīma

11 With straight-coursing, lovely-feathered arrows.
Stationed in the centre of these chariot-heroes, bull-brave

12 Arjuna and Bhīma seemed to be playing with them,
Like two proud lions among a herd of cows.

13 Sundering the bows of their heroic opponents,
The two fierce brothers hacked off heads in thousands. . .

14 Innumerable chariots shattered, hundreds of horses killed;
Elephants collapsing, their riders toppling in that mahā-battle,

15 Chariot-heroes and horse-riders lying dead;
The battlefield trembling with a nameless fear, O rājā.

16 Corpses of elephants and soldiers strewn everywhere;
Mutilated horses, pulverised chariots cluttering the field.

17 Shredded umbrellas, tattered flags everywhere;
Golden-handled yak-tail fans littering the earth;
Small bells and whips and strips scattered, O Bharata;

18 Torn leather-protectors for fingers, buckled armour,
Necklaces, and armlets, bracelets, ear-rings;

19 Blankets of soft *raṅku*-deer skin, bright turbans,
All kinds of weapons like scrap on the battlefield . . .

20 Shorn arms of warriors decorated with sandal-paste,
Severed thighs of Indra-like heroes lay on the battlefield . . .

21 It was then that Pārtha-Arjuna displayed marvels!
The mahā-powerful warrior killed hundreds with his arrows.

22 Your son Duryodhana, seeing Bhīma and Arjuna's feats,
Stationed his chariot as close as he could to Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma

23 Kṛpa, Kṛtavarman, Jayadratha of the Sindhus,
And Avanti's Vinda and Anuvinda did not stop fighting.

24 Mahā-bowman Bhīma and mahā-chariot-hero Phālguna-Arjuna
Stepped up their unceasing slaughter of the Kauravas.

25 A countless shower of arrows was fired on Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
By the Kaurava assembly of world-lords.

26 Neutralising the mahā-chariot-heroes' shower with a network
Of his own, Parthā-Arjuna packed off many to death.

27 The infuriated mahā-chariot-hero Śālya
condescendingly struck Jiṣṇu-Arjuna
In the chest with knotted and broad-head *bhalla* arrows.

28 With five arrows Parthā-Arjuna shredded his bow and finger-protectors,
And with fiercely sharp shafts hit his vulnerable parts.

29 Picking up another, extremely flexible bow,
The Madra-ruler, excited, harassed Jiṣṇu-Arjuna

30 With three arrows, and Vāsudeva-Krishna with five, mahārāja,
And Bhīmasena in his chest and arms with nine.

31 Mahārāja, Droṇa and the mahā-chariot-hero Magadha-ruler,
Under orders from Duryodhana, hurried to the spot

32 Where, mahārāja, Pāṇḍava-Bhīma and Parthā-Arjuna stood firm,
Two mahā-chariot-heroes slaughtering your massive army's warriors.

33 In that clash Jayatsena assailed brutal-in-battle Bhīma,
O bull-brave Bharata, with eight sharp arrows.

34 Bhīma pinned him down with ten and re-attacked with five
Bhalla-shafts that knocked his charioteer out of the vehicle.

35 Rushing uncontrolled in his driver-less chariot,
The Magadha-rājā was seen fleeing from the field.

36 Seizing his chance, Droṇa wounded Bhīma
With sixtyfive sharp steel arrows.

37 Wonderful-in-war Bhīma harassed his father-like guru, O Bharata,
First with five and then with sixty *bhalla*-arrows.

38 Arjuna wounded Suśarmā with countless arrows
And routed his soldiers like a storm scattering clouds.

39 Bhīṣma, rājā Duryodhana, and Bṛhadbala of Kausalya,
Roused to fury, jointly attacked Dhanañjaya-Arjuna and Bhīma.

40 The Pāṇḍava heroes and Drupada's son Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Then attacked Bhīṣma, who stood firm like gaping-jawed Antaka-Death.

41 Śikhaṇḍin advanced towards the Bharata Pitāmaha
Without fear; with joy he approached the mahā-
chariot-hero.

42 Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons, led by Yudhiṣṭhira, with
Śikhaṇḍin in front,
Assisted by the Sṛñjayas, clashed with Bhīṣma;

43 And all your warriors led by strict-vowed Bhīṣma
Battled with Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons led by Śikhaṇḍin.

44 The clash for victory then between the Kauravas
And the Pāṇḍavas over Bhīṣma was indescribably
grisly.

45 It was victory or defeat, with Bhīṣma as the stake,
It was a game of dice played by two armies,
O lord of the world.

46 O Indra-among-rājās, Dhṛṣṭadyumna urged his
soldiers:
"Attack Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma, excellent chariot-heroes!
Do not fear."

47 Obeying the command of their general, the Pāṇḍavas,
Reckless of their lives, unitedly rushed Bhīṣma in
that mahā-clash.

48 And the incomparable chariot-hero Bhīṣma received
the attack, mahārāja,
As the shores of the ocean receive the pounding
waves.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-FIFTEEN

1 "Tell me, Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"how mahā-brave Bhīṣma
fought back the Pāṇḍava and Sañjaya offensive
on the tenth day.

2 And how did the Kauravas reply
to the attack?
Describe exactly how brilliant Bhīṣma
tackled the mahā-assault."

3 I shall provide you all the details
(replied Sañjaya)
of the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava confrontation,
O Bharata descendant.

4 Every day, diadem-wearing Arjuna ensured
that he would despatch
countless of your mahā-chariot-heroes
to the other world.

5 In the same way,
the foe-conquering Kaurava hero Bhīṣma,
true to his vow,
killed innumerable Pāṇḍava soldiers.

6 Seeing Bhīṣma fighting for the Kauravas,
O foe-crushing king,
and Arjuna for the Pāṇḍavas,
we could not tell who would win.

7 When Arjuna and Bhīṣma clashed
on the tenth day,
the slaughter that took place
was mahā-gruesome.

8 O rājā! Śāntanu's foe-crushing son Bhīṣma,
who knew how to use all weapons,
killed the Pāṇḍava warriors
in hundreds and thousands.

9 They lay anonymous on the field, O earth-lord,
the soldiers
who refused to retreat,
slain by the prowess of Bhīṣma.

10 After decimating the Pāṇḍava army for ten days,
O foe-crushing king,
dharmātmā Bhīṣma
lost his desire for life.

11 He wanted his enemies should end his life
as quickly as possible.
No more excellent human beings
shall I kill in battle –

12 Thinking in this manner, mahārāja,
your mahā-muscled, strict-vowed *pitā,*
Devavrata-Bhīṣma said to Yudhiṣṭhira,
who was near him:

13 "You are mahā-wise, Yudhiṣṭhira, *tāta*, my child,
you are learned in all the śāstras.
Listen to my words.
They are words of dharma, they will lead to heaven.

14 I have had my fill of life, *tatā*, my child.
O Bharata descendant! I have passed my time
killing too many men on the field of battle.

15 If you wish me well,
kill me.
Position the Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas with Arjuna
in front of you,
and kill me."

16 Convinced that this was Bhīṣma's desire,
truth-inseeing rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
stationed the Sṛñjayas in front and attacked Bhīṣma.

17 Acting on the suggestion of Bhīṣma, O rājā,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira
commanded their forces:

18 "Advance!
Fight!
Defeat Bhīṣma!
You will be covered by Jiṣṇu-Arjuna,
the invincible, never-failing hero.

19 Our general, valiant mahā-bowman Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
and Bhīma will give you support.

20 Sṛñjaya heroes! Discard your fear of Bhīṣma!
Place Śikhaṇḍin in front –
he will crush Bhīṣma."

21 On the tenth day they adopted this plan,
determined to go to the realm of Brahmā
or conquer and live.

22 In a fury of rage they attacked Bhīṣma,
after ensuring that Śikhaṇḍin and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
were at the army's head.

23 Ordered by your son Duryodhana,
the mahā-powerful rulers of different lands
marched to battle, accompanied by Droṇa
and Aśvatthāman.

24 Your brilliantly accomplished son Duḥśāsana,
with the assistance of his brothers,
formed a protective ring
round Bhīṣma.

25 The warriors of your army also,
placing mahā-vowed Bhīṣma in front,
prepared to fight Śikhaṇḍin
and Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons.

26 The ape-emblemed hero Arjuna
positioned Śikhaṇḍin in front of him
and, helped by Cedis and Pāñcālas,
attacked Śāntanava-Bhīṣma.

27 Sātyaki combated with Aśvatthāman, Dhṛṣṭaketu
with Paurava,
And Abhimanyu with Duryodhana and his warriors.

28 O foe-crushing king! Virāṭa with a large force
fought with Jayadratha,
The son and heir of Vṛddhakṣatra.

29 The mahā-bowman Yudhiṣthira with his troops
attacked Śālya, the rājā of Madra,
and Bhīma concentrated
on your army's war-elephants.

30 Dhṛṣṭadyumna of the Pāñcālas,
assisted by his brothers,
angrily assaulted the formidable, unbeaten,
arms-expert Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman.

31 Bṛhadbala encountered Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
whose flag-emblem was a lion
and whose flag fluttered
like a *karṇikāra* flower.

32 Your sons, with the assistance
of a gallery of rājās, attacked Śikhaṇḍin
and Pāṇḍu's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
with intent to kill.

33 When the warriors of the two armies
clashed fiercely
in that horrendous conflict,
the earth shook under them.

34 O Bharata descendant! With Bhīṣma as their target,
your soldiers and the soldiers
of the illustrious Pāṇḍavas clashed fiercely
on the battlefield.

35 When the two agitated armies collided,
the cacophony
filled all the ten directions of the earth,
O Bharata descendant.

36 A colossal cacophony! – conches blaring,
dundubhi-drums sounding,
elephants trumpeting, and soldiers screaming
their leonine war-cries.

37 The sun-and-moon-like radiance
of the bracelets and diadems
of the Indra-like heroes
was obscured.

38 In the clouds of dust that rose
on the field
weapons flashed like lightning,
bows twanged like thunder.

39 Shooting arrows
Blaring conches
Thudding drums
Clattering chariots –
A mahā-stupendous din!

40 Spears
Śakti-missiles
Arrows
Lances
Hurled by the warriors
Blotted the sky.

41 Chariot-heroes and elephant-warriors killed each other,
Elephants mauled elephants, foot-soldiers slew foot-
soldiers.

42 O tiger-among-men! Like two hawks swooping
for a chunk of flesh,
the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas battled over Bhīṣma
in that mahā-massacre.

43 It was a grisly encounter,
a mahā-horrendous battle,
with each army murderously fighting
for victory.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-SIXTEEN

1 Mahārāja! In order to kill Bhīṣma
(continued Sañjaya),
powerful Abhimanyu battled with your son Duryodhana
and his host of warriors.

2 Duryodhana in a fit of rage wounded
Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu
first in the chest with nine knotted arrows,
and later with three.

3 Abhimanyu, also incensed,
targeting the chariot of Duryodhana,
hurled a *śakti*-missile
looking like Death's sister.

4 Your mahā-chariot-hero son Duryodhana
pulverised the *śakti*
in midflight with a fierce razor-arrow,
O lord of the world.

5 The shattered *śakti* fell in fragments.
Infuriated, Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu
re-attacked and pierced Duryodhana's chest
and arms.

6 The mahā-chariot-hero Abhimanyu,
O best of the Bharatas,
released ten more arrows straight
at Duryodhana's chest.

7 The clash between these two heroes, O Bharata,
was spectacular;
it pleased the senses and drew the pūjā-praise
of the earth-lords.

8 Two bull-brave Kauravas – Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
and your son Duryodhana
fought for two objectives:
death of Bhīṣma, defeat of Arjuna.

9 The bull-brave foe-crushing Brahmin,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
pierced Sātyaki's chest
with a long-stemmed *nārāca*-arrow.

10 Generous-ātmaned Sātyaki wounded
his guru's son Aśvatthāman
with nine arrows, O Bharata,
fitted with *kaṅka*-feathers.

11 Retaliating, Aśvatthāman harassed Sātyaki
first with nine arrows
and then with thirty
aimed at his chest and arms.

12 Pierced by the arrows of Droṇa's son,
the mahā-bowman
mahā-illustrious Sātyaki
countered with three sharp arrows.

13 The mahā-chariot-hero Paurava pinned down
the mahā-bowman Dhṛṣṭaketu
and repeatedly wounded him
with arrows.

14 The mahā-muscled mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭaketu shouted his war-cry
and shot thirty of the sharpest arrows
at Paurava.

[VI:116:15-23]

Transcreated by P. Lal

15 The mahā-chariot-hero Paurava
sliced Dhṛṣṭaketu's bow
and with a leonine war-cry retaliated
with thirty sharp arrows.

16 Dhṛṣṭaketu replied by brandishing
another bow, mahārāja,
and severely wounding Paurava
with sixty-three stone arrows.

17 The strong-armed warriors, both of them
brilliant bowmen and mahā-chariot-heroes,
deluged each other
with arrows.

18 O Bharata! Livid with rage;
they disintegrated each other's bows,
killed their horses, and fell upon each other
with naked swords.

19 It was mahā-awe-inspiring to see them
with their shields
of bull-hide encrusted with hundreds
of moon-like gems –

20 Two sword-brandishing heroes battling,
O rājā,
like two lions pouncing on each other
over a lioness.

21 They circled and parried and feinted,
each pressing for advantage,
advancing and backing
with maṇḍala-elegance.

22 The infuriated warrior Paurava lifted
his huge sword
and struck near Dhṛṣṭaketu's neck,
shouting "Stop! Stop!"

23 The Cedi-rājā Dhṛṣṭaketu also swung
his massive sword
and brought it down hard
on bull-brave Paurava's shoulder-joint.

24 Mahārāja, the two foe-crushing heroes,
in that mahā-duel,
hit each other with such tremendous force
that both fell.

25 Your son Jayatsena drove his chariot up
to Paurava
and speedily rushed away with him
in the vehicle.

26 Similarly, Mādrī's son Sahadeva,
famed for his prowess,
infuriated, rescued Dhṛṣṭaketu
in his war-chariot.

27 Meanwhile, Citrasena stepped up
his steel arrow attack,
wounding Suśarmā first with sixty,
then with nine shafts.

28 O lord of the world! In a burst of fury,
Suśarmā fired volleys
of ten arrows that succeeded
in wounding Citrasena.

29 He pressed his advantage, O rājā,
with another nine knotted arrows;
but Citrasena, recovering,
retaliated with an arrow-shower.

30 He added to the lustre and glory of Bhīṣma,
O rājā.
Elsewhere, Abhimanyu continued his attack
on prince Bṛhadbala,

31 Helping his father Arjuna to concentrate
on Bhīṣma.
The Indra-like Kosala ruler wounded Abhimanyu
with five steel shafts,

32 And harassed him
with twenty more knotted ones.
Saubhadra-Abhimanyu struck back at Kosala
with eight steel shafts,

33 But failed to unnerve Bṛhadbala.
Phālguna-Abhimanyu struck again,
this time shattering the bow
of the Kosala ruler,

34 And wounding him with thirty
kaṅka feathered arrows.
But prince Bṛhadbala picked up
another splendid bow,

35 And angrily fired countless arrows
at Phālguni-Abhimanyu.
So the skirmish proceeded over Bhīṣma,
O foe-crushing

36 Mahārāja, between two agitated heroes,
both experts in war,
like the Vāsava-Indra-Bali clash
in the god-antigod war.

37 Like Vajrapāṇi-Indra shattering mountains
with his thunderbolt,
Bhima felled the Kaurava war-elephants
on the battlefield.

38 The hill-huge war-elephants collapsed
on the earth one by one,
screaming and trumpeting
in agony.

39 The hill-huge coal-dark elephants
felled by Bhīma
dotted the field like so many peaks
of a range of hills.

40 Then the mahā-bowman Yudhiṣṭhira,
with a huge army
launched an attack on Śalya,
the rājā of Madra.

41 The brave Madra-ruler also,
pledged to defend Bhīṣma,
harassed the mahā-chariot-hero,
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

42 The Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha
attacked Virāṭa
first with nine knotted arrows,
and later with thirty more.

43 Mahārāja, the army-leader Virāṭa
replied with thirty arrows
that struck the Sindhu-ruler straight
in his chest.

44 They looked radiant – the handsome rulers
of Matsya and Sindhu –
with their war-armour, flags, bows
and swords.

45 Meanwhile, Droṇa was embroiled
in a fierce duel with knotted arrows
with Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
the Pāñcāla prince.

46 Mahārāja, Droṇa sliced the bow
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and pinned him down with a barrage
of fifty arrows.

47 Drupada's son, hostile-hero-crushing Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
fitted another bow;
then he fired at Droṇa
a stream of arrows.

48 But the mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
smashed them in mid-air,
and retaliated with five more arrows
at Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

49 Then hostile-hero-crushing Dhṛṣṭadyumna, mahārāja,
in extreme anger,
flung a mace that sped like Yama's rod
towards Droṇa.

50 O rājā! Seeing it whirling towards him,
Droṇa fired fifty gold-decorated arrows
that shattered the mace
in mid-flight.

51 Disintegrated by the golden arrows of Droṇa,
O rājā,
the débris of the mace scattered
on the battlefield.

52 Seeing his mace pulverised, Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
the foe-crushing Pārṣata,
hurled his radiant *śakti*-missile
at Droṇa,

53 Which Droṇa neutralised with nine arrows,
O Bharata;
after which he launched a terrorising attack
on the mahā-archer Dhṛṣṭadyumna

54 What a mahā-battle it was, mahārāja! –
between Droṇa
and Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna over Bhīṣma –
horrific and fearful.

55 Sighting Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma,
Arjuna charged at him
like a musth elephant attacking another
in a forest.

56 But mahā-powerful rājā Bhagadatta
intercepted brave Arjuna,
with a musth elephant whose temples streamed
with three rutting juices.

57 Seeing the war-elephant of Bhagadatta
looming towards him
like Mahendra-Indra's elephant,
Bībhatsu-Arjuna prepared himself.

58 But valiant Bhagadatta was successful
in releasing an arrow-shower
that forced Arjuna
to remain immobile.

59 However, this did not prevent Arjuna
from wounding
Bhagadatta's elephant
with sharp, shining, steel arrows.

60 Mahārāja, Kuntī's son Arjuna
kept prodding Śikhaṇḍin with the words:
"Rush him!
Rush Bhīṣma and kill him!"

61 O rājā! O elder brother of Pāṇḍu!
In the meantime
Bhagadatta, skirting Arjuna,
suddenly attacked Drupada's chariot.

62 And Arjuna, mahārāja,
with Śikhaṇḍin as his shield,
advanced towards Bhīṣma.
A violent clash occurred.

63 Your heroic warriors,
screaming their victory-cries,
rushed in a body at Pāṇḍava Arjuna.
An awe-inspiring sight!

64 O lord of men! Like a fierce storm
dissipating clouds,
Arjuna scattered the different divisions
of your army.

65 Waiting for his opportunity,
Śikhaṇḍin patiently faced Pitāmaha Bhīṣma,
harassing him
with many arrows.

66 Bhīṣma:
A raging fire
Consuming Kṣatriyas –
chariots its centre
bows its flames
śaktis and swords and maces its fuel
arrows its fearful sparks.

67 Like a fire
fed with fuel
leaping wind-fanned
from house to house
So Bhīṣma
with divine weapons
killed warrior after warrior.

68 The mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma stopped
the advance of Arjuna's soldiers,
and killed Arjuna's followers,
the Somakas

69 With gold-feathered
flat-bodied
knife-edged arrows;
He filled the sky's
main quarters
and subsidiaries
with his victory-shouts.
in that mahā-battle.

70 He slaughtered horses
and horse-riders
He unseated chariot-heroes
from their chariots
Till the chariot-formation
looked like palm-trees
with their tops chopped off.

71 The expert-in-all-weapons Bhīṣma
deprived chariots,
and horses, and elephants
of their brave riders.

72 The twang of his bowstring
and the slap of his arms
on the field of battle
to the soldiers sounded
like the clap of thunder
swamping the sky.

73 O lord of people! Your *pitā's* arrows
sped straight to their targets.
They did not graze or glance off skins,
they penetrated them.

74 O rājā! We saw on the battlefield
many riderless chariots
dragged by their swift horses
with the speed of wind.

75 Fourteen thousand mahā-chariot-heroes
of Cedi,
Kāśi and Karūṣa were ready to sacrifice
their lives.

76 Soldiers who never retreated in battle,
soldiers flying golden banners,
with elephants and horses,
stood near Bhīṣma,

77 Who looked like gaping-jawed Antaka-Kāla,
all ready to lay down their lives.
Not a single Somaka mahā-chariot-hero,
O rājā,

78 Believed that he could survive battle
with Bhīṣma.
Seeing all those heroes sent to the realm
of the *preta*-rājā,

79 Everyone applauded the amazing prowess
of Bhīṣma.
No mahā-chariot-hero then dared
to go and confront Bhīṣma,

80 Except the heroic son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna,
whose milk-white horses
had Krishna as charioteer,
and the illimitably valiant Pāñcālya-Śikhaṇḍin.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-SEVENTEEN

1 In his encounter with Bhīṣma
(continued Sañjaya),
Śikhaṇḍin hit the chest of bull-brave Bhīṣma
with *bhalla*-arrows.

2 Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma stared fixedly at Śikhaṇḍin,
O Bharata,
as it consuming him with unappeasable,
fierce anger.

3 But, respecting Śikhaṇḍin's femininity,
he refrained from retaliating.
Śikhaṇḍin did not realise this,
O rājā.

4 Mahārāja, Arjuna shouted to Śikhaṇḍin,
"Hurry! Now!
Rush to the Pitāmaha, quick,
and finish him off!

5 What is worrying you, brave one?
What do you want to say?
Kill the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma!
None in the army of Yudhiṣṭhira

6 Is a match for Bhīṣma but you,
O tiger-among-men.
What I tell you
is the truth."

7 Śikhaṇḍin, following Arjuna's advice,
O bull-brave Bharata,
deluged the Pitāmaha
with multitudinous arrows,

8 Which your *pitā* Devavrata-Bhīṣma ignored
as if of no concern,
and concentrated instead on firing arrows
at Arjuna.

9 With his sharp arrows, O gracious monarch,
the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma
despatched many Pāṇḍava heroes
to the other world.

10 But Pāṇḍu's sons,
supported by a massive force,
hemmed Bhīṣma in,
like clouds obscuring the sun.

11 O bull-brave Bharata! Though cornered,
Bhīṣma devastated
his Pāṇḍava attackers
like a fierce forest fire.

12 We witnessed then the splendid feat
of your son Duḥśāsana
who simultaneously fought Pārtha-Arjuna
and defended Pitāmaha Bhīṣma.

13 The excellence of your mahātmā son Duḥśāsana
on the battlefield
as he wielded his bow
left people breathlessly satiated.

14 He tackled Arjuna and the Pāṇḍavas
singlehanded;
such was his intensity that the Pāṇḍavas
wilted before him.

15 Duḥśāsana hurled chariot-warriors
from their vehicles;
powerful horse-riders and valiant riders
of elephants,

16 Felled by his arrows, fatally collapsed
on the earth.
Arrow-mutilated tuskers fled
helter-skelter.

17 Like a well-fed fire scattering
fuel-fanned flames,
your son angrily showered arrows
on the Pāṇḍavas.

18 None of the mahā-chariot-heroes
of the Pāṇḍavas
dared face, let alone defeat,
that mahā Bharata warrior,

19 Except Mahendra-Indra's white-horsed,
Krishna-charioted son Arjuna.
Always-victorious Arjuna, O rājā,
baffling your warriors,

20 Once again darted towards Bhīṣma
in the presence of everyone.
Replused, Duḥśāsana relied
on Bhīṣma's prowess,

21 And simultaneously fought the Pāṇḍavas
and inspired his own soldiers.
O rājā! It was a pleasure
seeing Arjuna fighting.

22 Once again, Śikhaṇḍin harassed the Pitāmaha
with sharp arrows,
that spat fatal poison and hit, O rājā,
like thunderbolts.

23 And yet they failed to impress your *pitā*,
O lord of men,
for Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma stood there calmly,
with a smile accepting the assault.

24 He welcomed them –
the shower of arrows
shot by Śikhaṇḍin,
like a thirsty man
in the height of summer
welcoming rain.

25 Mahārāja, he presented an awesome sight
to the Kṣatriyas
as he stood there
devastating the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas.

26 It was then that your son Duryodhana,
O gracious monarch,
addressed his soldiers:
"Attack Phālguna-Arjuna from all sides.

27 Dharma-knowing Bhīṣma will cover us
fully."
Casting aside their mahā-fear,
your soldiers re-attacked the Pāṇḍavas.

28 "You can see Bhīṣma clearly
with his golden palm-emblemed flag,
safeguarding the honour
of our army.

29 Even the gods, no matter how hard they strive,
cannot defeat mahātmā Bhīṣma.
How can the mortal Pāṇḍavas do so,
however mahā-powerful they are?

30 Therefore, stand firm,
even if Arjuna attacks you.
I will summon all my strength
against the Pāṇḍavas,

31 And attack with the help
of all these great earth-lords."
This assurance of your bow-wielding
son Duryodhana, O rājā,

32 Roused the mahā-powerful Kaurava warriors
of Videha,
Kaliṅga, Dāseraka and other territories,
to furious rage,

33 In that mahā-war. The Niśādas, Sauvīras,
Bāhlīkas, Daradas, Pratīcyas, Udīcyas, Mālavas,

34 Abhīṣāhas, Śūrasenas, Śibis, Vasātis,
Śālvas, Śakas, Trigartas, Ambaṣṭhas, and Kekayas

35 Swooped on Pārtha-Arjuna like insects into a fire.
O Indra-among-rājās mahārāja! Valiant Arjuna
Wrought havoc in the ranks of the mahā-chariot-
heroes.

36 The celestial missiles of mahā-powerful
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's bow,
Propelled with the velocity of a gale,

37 Consumed his adversaries like fire devouring flies.
With the thousands of arrows speeding from it,

38 His Gāṇḍīva-bow shone with fierce incandescence.
Mahārāja, with all their mahā war-flags shredded,

39 The Kaurava rājās dared not confront ape-bannered
Arjuna. Their flags, horses, horse-riders, chariot-heroes,

40 Elephants and elephant-riders succumbed
to diadem-wearing Arjuna.
As a result of his numerous arrows, the earth

41 Was filled with rājās fleeing for their lives.
Routing the ranks of his enemies, mahārāja, Pārtha-
Arjuna

42 Diverted his arrows now towards your son Duḥśāsana.
The steel-tipped arrows penetrated his body,

43 And entered the earth like snakes slithering inside
ant-hills.
Next, Arjuna killed Duḥśāsana's horses and charioteer.

44 With twenty arrows he demolished the chariot of
Viviṁśati,
And wounded him with five knotted shafts.

45 Kṛpa, Vikarṇa, and Śalya were next wounded with
arrows
And deprived of their chariots by white-horsed Arjuna.

46 O gracious monarch, deprived of their chariots,
Kṛpa, Śalya, Duḥśāsana, Vikarṇa and Viviṁśati,

47 Humiliated by Savyasācī-Arjuna, fled, O excellent
Bharata.
After defeating the mahā-chariot-heroes at noon,

48 Pārtha-Arjuna shone on the field like a smokeless
flame.
Like the sun shooting its rays in all directions,

49 Arjuna fired his volleys of singeing arrows, mahārāja,
Killing many chariot-heroes and earth-lords.

50 O Bharata! On that field of battle a massive river of
blood
Began flowing between the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava
armies.

51 Chariot-heroes killed
elephants
horses
and other chariot-heroes
Elephants crushed
chariot-heroes
Foot-soldiers slew
horse-riders

52 Bodies collapsed
bifurcated
Heads of heroes
toppled
Corpses lay scattered
of cavalry
chariot-heroes
and elephant-riders

53 The battlefield O rājā
was littered
with fallen bodies
and falling bodies
of royal chariot-heroes
radiant with bracelets and earrings

54 The battlefield
was littered
with bodies pulped
under chariot-wheels
with bodies trampled
by elephants
Foot-soldiers
and cavalrymen
and horses
scattered in panic

55 Elephants and chariot-heroes
toppled
Chariots lay on the field
wheels smashed
yokes splintered
flags shredded

56 The battlefield
bloodied
with gore of elephants
and horses
and chariot-heroes
was as beautiful
as an autumn sky
flecked with red
sunset clouds

57 Dogs
crows
vultures
wolves
jackals
and other beasts
    shrilled in delight
seeing the feast
in front of them

58 Rākṣasas
and spirits
    screeched
    and howled
Various winds
    blew
    from all directions

59 Gold necklaces
    unclaimed
    on the ground
Mahā-expensive flags
    tattered
    fluttering faintly
    with each stray gust

60 White umbrellas
    thousands of them
And mahā-chariot-heroes
    thousands of them
With their flags
    thousands of them
    scattered
    on the field

61 Huge elephants
    with war-flags waving
    wandering in a daze
Kṣatriyas
    with maces
    śakti-missiles
    and bows

62 Lying on the ground
as far as the eye could see . . .
Then, mahārāja,
Bhīṣma invoked his divine weapons

63 And, in front of all the assembled bowmen,
attacked Kaunteya-Arjuna.
Śikhaṇḍin in heavy armour
confronted him.

64 Immediately Bhīṣma withdrew his fire-missile.
Meanwhile, O rājā,
the third Pāṇḍava brother,
white-horsed Śvetavāhana-Arjuna,
eluding Bhīṣma, started decimating
your Kaurava army.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-EIGHTEEN

1 Both armies re-grouped (continued Sañjaya),
and the never retreating heroes
prepared themselves, O Bharata descendant,
for the realm of Brahmā.

2 It was a disorganised battle,
not fought as it should:
chariot-heroes did not combat chariot-heroes,
nor soldiers, soldiers;

3 Horse-riders did not fight horse-riders,
nor elephant-riders their counterparts.
They fought indiscriminately, O Bharata,
and blindly.

4 It was a mahā-gory massacre on both sides,
and countless men and animals
could be seen sprawled dead
on the battlefield.

5 No soldier seemed to recognise another
in that mahā-grisly clash.
Then, O Bharata descendant,
Śālya, Kṛpa, Citrasena,

6 And Duḥśāsana and Vikarṇa,
mighty heroes all of them,
made the Pāṇḍava ranks
tremble on the battlefield.

7 Buffeted O rājā
by these mahātmā heroes
the Pāṇḍava army
tossed and wheeled
like a small boat
on a tempestuous sea.

8 Like wintry chill
piercing the hides of cows,
Bhīṣma injected fear
in the hearts of the Pāṇḍavas.

9 Many huge cloud-like elephants
of your army
were destroyed by mahātmā Arjuna
on the battlefield.

10 With his darts and *nārāca*-arrows
released in hundreds and thousands,
Pārthā-Arjuna crushed and decimated
the leaders of your soldiers.

11 Mahā-elephants collapsed,
trumpeting in agony.
The battlefield, littered
with the corpses of mahātmā-heroes,

12 Radiated an eerie grandeur,
strewn with ear-ringed heads.
Mahārāja, that battle
that devastated mahā-heroes,

13 Had Bhīṣma and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
locked in fatal combat,
while your sons watched
their Pitāmaha struggling, O rājā,

14 And rushed with their soldiers
to his defence.
Resolved to die fighting,
seeking heaven as their goal,

15 They swooped on the Pāṇḍavas
in a fury of destruction.
The Pāṇḍavas, mahārāja,
recalling their days of misery,

16 Inflicted on them by you and your sons,
forgot their fear, O lord of men,
and eager to achieve on the field
the realm of Brahmā,

17 Confidently continued battling
with the army of your sons.
The mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍava commander
ordered his soldiers:

18 "Somakas, unite with the Sṛñjayas,
and attack Bhīṣma."
Commanded by Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
the Somakas and Sṛñjayas

19 Braved a hail of arrows
and rushed at Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma.
Your *pitā*, Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma,
though under pressure, O rājā,

20 Battled with the Sṛñjayas,
in cold fury.
In the distant past,
wise Paraśurāma had tutored Bhīṣma

21 In the art of wielding
foe-annihilating weapons.
Utilising that knowledge,
and decimating his attackers,

22 The Kuru Pitāmaha
a crusher of heroic foes,
daily liquidated
ten thousand Pāṇḍava soldiers.

23 On the tenth day of battle,
concentrating on the Matsyas and Pāñcālas,
Bhīṣma, singlehanded,
O bull-brave Bharata,

24 Killed countless elephants and horses
and seven mahā-chariot-heroes.
Later, Prapitāmaha Grancestor Bhīṣma
wiped out five thousand chariot-heroes;

25 And, as the battle progressed,
he killed fourteen thousand soldiers,
one thousand elephants,
and ten thousand horses.

26 Your *pitā* killed them, O lord of the world,
by virtue of his special war-skills,
in this way decimating
the armies of the earth-lords.

27 Valiant Bhīṣma killed Śantānīka,
the dear brother of Virāṭa.
Having killed Śantānīka,
Bhīṣma,

28 Mahārāja, vanquished thousands of rājās
with *bhalla*-arrows.
All the warriors started screaming for help
to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

29 All the Pāṇḍava rājā warriors
who were reinforcing Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
were despatched to Yama's abode
the moment they neared Bhīṣma.

30 Embracing all the ten directions
with his network of arrows,
Bhīṣma harassed the entire army
of Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons.

31 On the tenth day of battle,
displaying mahā-splendid feats,
bow-brandishing Bhīṣma remained as buffer
between the two armies.

32 No earth-lord dared look at him,
O rājā,
because he resembled the sun
at its blinding summer peak.

33 As, in the distant past,
Śakra-Indra routed the Daityas,
so Bhīṣma routed the ranks
of the Pāṇḍavas, O Bharata.

34 Seeing Bhīṣma's unique feat,
the slayer of Madhu,
Devakī's son Krishna
said happily to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:

35 "There you see Śāntanu's son
between the two armies.
Attack him! Kill him!
– and victory is yours.

36 Go where he stands,
harassing your warriors.
Immobilise him, O radiant one!
Only your arrows can do this."

37 Urged by Krishna, O rājā,
vānara-emblemed Arjuna obscured
Bhīṣma's flag, chariot and horses
with his swirling arrows.

38 But bull-brave Kaurava Bhīṣma
with a counter-shower
neutralised the swarm of arrows
that Pāṇḍava-Arjuna had poured on him.

39 And with sharp, knotted arrows
as deadly as thunderbolts
he recommenced his extermination
of the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes.

40 The Pāñcāla-rājā Drupada, heroic Dhṛṣṭaketu,
Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma, Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

41 Nakula and Sahadeva, Cekitāna, the five Kekaya
princes,
Mahā-muscled Sātyaki, Abhimanyu, Ghaṭotkaca,

42 Draupadī's sons, Śikhaṇḍin, heroic Kuntibhoja,
Suśarmā, Virāṭa, and the mahā-powerful Pāṇḍava
warriors,

43 Under the onslaught of Bhīṣma,
were plunged in an ocean of grief –
but fortunately
rescued by Phālguna-Arjuna.

44 Using his splendid weapons,
and covered by diadem-wearing Arjuna,
Śikhaṇḍin
again attacked Bhīṣma.

45 All-weapons-expert and never-defeated
dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna
killed Bhīṣma's followers
and targeted Bhīṣma.

46 Sātyaki, Cekitāna, Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Virāṭa, Drupada, and Mādrī's twin sons by Pāṇḍu

47 Rushed in a body at Bhīṣma
under cover of Arjuna.
In that clash, Abhimanyu
and the five sons of Draupadī

48 Also rushed at Bhīṣma,
brandishing their weapons.
They were all brilliant bowmen
and never-retreating heroes.

49 The earth-lords fired foe-crushing arrows
to harass Bhīṣma,
but Bhīṣma remained unperturbed
and repulsed their attack,

50 And succeeded in penetrating
the Pāṇḍava ranks.
The generous-ātmaned Pitāmaha playfully
baffled the Pāṇḍavas with his arrows.

51 Only the femininity of Śikhaṇḍin
prevented him piercing further:
he would smile and turn away
and refuse to shoot arrows.

52 The mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma
killed seven
of Drupada's finest chariot-heroes.
Suddenly, *kilakila*-shouts and confusion,

53 As the Matsyas, Pāñcālas and Cedis,
  O foe-crusher, rushed at Bhīṣma
with horses, chariots, foot-soldiers
  and swarms of arrows,

54 Like massive clouds
  shrouding the single sun.
Bhāgīrathī-Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma,
  though alone, retaliated fiercely.

55 That clash between Bhīṣma
  and Śikhaṇḍin-shielded Kirīṭin-Arjuna
resembled the war
  between the gods and antigods.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-NINETEEN

1 The Pāṇḍavas with Śikhaṇḍin in front
  (continued Sañjaya)
encircled Bhīṣma
  for the final assault.

2 With fire-belching pipe-guns,
  clubs, battle-axes, mallets,
spears, heavy bludgeons,
  and other weapons,

3 With golden-winged arrows,
  śakti-missiles, *kampanas,*
long-stemmed shafts, calf-toothed arrows,
  bhuśuṇḍi-rockets;

4 The Sṛñjayas launched
  their attack on Bhīṣma.
His armour pierced
  and he himself wounded

5 In many vital parts –
  yet Bhīṣma remained calm.
Yet a flaming fire too –
  whose flames were
  his arrows and bow
Whose fanning wind

6 His arrows' vibrations
Whose heat
the clatter of his chariot-wheels
Whose lustre
his varied mahā-weapons
Whose fuel
the dead soldiers –

7 A yuga-end fire
at the dissolution of the universe!
Swerving his chariot
in that mêlée, he emerged

8 And suddenly plunged back
into that army of Indra-brave warriors.
Evading the Pāñcāla-rājā
and Dhṛṣṭaketu,

9 Bhīṣma slipped inside the Pāṇḍava-centre,
O lord of the world.
Sātyaki, Bhīma,
and Pāṇḍu's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,

10 Drupada, Virāṭa and Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna, –
With fierce, mahā-swift, armour-penetrating arrows

11 Bhīṣma assailed these six
mahā-chariot-heroes.
They retaliated
against his ferocity

12 By pinning him down
with ten arrows each.
The arrows fired
by the mahā-chariot-her Śikhaṇḍin,

13 Golden-winged and stone-sharpened,
smoothly pierced his body.
Diadem-wearing Kirīṭin-Arjuna
wrathfully rushed at Bhīṣma,

14 With Śikhaṇḍin as cover,
and splintered his bow.
The Kaurava mahā-chariot-heroes
resented Bhīṣma's humiliation:

15 Droṇa, Kṛtavarman, Jayadratha of the Sindhus,
Bhūriśravas, Śala, Śalya, and Bhagadatta.

16 These seven, brandishing
supernatural weapons,
furiously rushed
at diadem-wearing Arjuna,

17 Grazing him with an angry barrage
of arrows,
screaming fiercely as they swooped
on Phālguna-Arjuna's chariot.

18 A cacophony like that
of the multitudinous ocean
overflowing its limits
during a yuga's dissolution!
"Kill, seize, bind!
Chop him to pieces!"–

19 These tumultuous shouts were raised
as they neared Phālguna-Arjuna's chariot.
Hearing these dreadful cries,
the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes

20 Rushed to Phālguna-Arjuna's defence, O bull-brave
Bharata:
Sātyaki, Bhīma, Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

21 Virāṭa, Drupada, the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,
And Abhimanyu – seven anger-inflamed heroes,

22 Brandishing their magnificent bows, speeding like
wind.
The horripilating tumultuous encounter that followed,

23 O bull-brave Bharata, resembled the clash
between the gods and Dānavas.
Protected by diadem-wearing Kirīṭin-Arjuna,
Śikhaṇḍin

24 Wounded bow-less Bhīṣma
with ten arrows,
and with another
shredded Bhīṣma's flag.

25 Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma
picked up another flexible bow,
and with sharp arrows
began harassing Phālguna-Arjuna
who splintered the bow
with three keen shafts.

26 Pāṇḍu's ambidexterous foe-crushing son,
Savyasācī-Arjuna,
in a fury of rage, smashed every bow
that Bhīṣma picked up.

27 Licking the corners of his mouth
in frustrated anger,
Bhīṣma aimed a *śakti*-missile
capable of sundering a mountain,

28 And hurled it at the chariot
of Phālguna-Arjuna.
Seeing it speeding like a thunderbolt
through the sky,

29 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna fitted
five *bhalla*-arrows,
and split the *śakti* neatly
into five fragments,

30 Though it was hurled
with all the strength of Bhīṣma.
O bull-brave Bharata,
shattered by Kirīṭin-Arjuna's arrows,

31 It fell like jagged lightning
from a cloud-cluster.
The sight of his shattered *śakti*
infuriated Bhīṣma,

32 And that hostile-foe-city conqueror
argued intelligently with himself:
I could kill all the Pāṇḍavas
with my bow

33 *If Krishna were not on their side*
to protect them.
I know that none in the three worlds
can defeat mahā-powerful Krishna.
There are two reasons
I will not fight the Pāṇḍavas:

34 *They are Pāṇḍavas:*
so I will not kill them;
besides, Śikhaṇḍin is female.
When my father married Kālī-Satyavati, happily

35 *He gave me two boons: self-willed death,*
and unslayability in battle.
I think the time has come
to will my death.

36 Realising that illimitably powerful Bhīṣma
had made up his mind,
the ṛṣis and Vasus in the sky
spoke to him:

37 "What you have willed, mahārāja,
is also our will. It pleases us, *tāta*, dear one.
Do then what you have willed.
Withdraw from battle."

38 Immediately a soft, fragrant, pleasing breeze
began to blow from all sides,
gently moist with soothing water particles.

39 O Māriṣa!
O honour-bestowing
monarch!
Divine
dundubhi-drums
sounded.
Flowers
rained
on Bhīṣma.

40 O king! The celestial voice
was heard by none
but mahā-muscled Bhīṣma
(through muni Vyasā's radiant grace).

41 O lord of the world! That Bhīṣma,
beloved of the worlds,
was willing his own death,
created mahā-panic among the gods.

42 Hearing the words of the gods,
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma,
performer of mahā-tapasyā,
refrained from attacking Bībhatsu-Arjuna,

43 Though Arjuna harassed him
with armour-piercing arrows.
It was then, mahārāja,
that the Bharata Pitāmāha by Śikhaṇḍin

44 Was grievously wounded in the chest
with nine sharp arrows.
Though assailed by the arrows,
the Pitāmāha of the Kauravas

45 Remained, mahārāja, as firm as a hill
in an earthquake tremor.
Smiling, and pulling taut
his Gāṇḍīva-bow, Bībhatsu

46 Dreadful-deed-doer Arjuna fired a volley
of twentyfive arrows at Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma.
Then another burst of a hundred arrows.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

47 Fired arrows that penetrated
Bhīṣma's vital parts.
Other warriors grazed Bhīṣma
with hundreds of shafts,

48 But mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma baffled them
with his own counter-showers.
Truly valiant Bhīṣma repulsed
the arrows of his a adversaries

49 With volley upon volley
of sharp knotted arrows.
The gold-winged, stone-sharpened arrows
that mahā-chariot-hero Sikhaṇḍin fired

50 Did not seem to produce
the least effect on Bhīṣma.
Attacking Bhīṣma in a burst of anger,
diadem-wearing Kirīṭin-Arjuna,

51 Placing Śikhaṇḍin as shield,
sliced Bhīṣma's bow,
shredded his flag with one,
wounded him with ten arrows,

52 And harassed his charioteer
with ten more.
Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma's lifted
another formidable bow

53 Which Kaunteya-Arjuna sliced in three pieces
with three *bhalla*-arrows.
In that great battle,
Arjuna systematically

54 Shattered each bow
that Bhīṣma picked up and fitted.
Finally, Bhīṣma stopped
his offensive posture, but Bībhatsu-

55 Arjuna continued his attack
with a twentyfive arrow volley.
Wounded, the mahā-bowman Bhīṣma
said to Duḥśāsana:

56 "The mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
in a fury of rage
continues his arrow-attacks on me –
hundreds of arrows.

57 Even thunderbolt-wielding Vajra-bhṛtā Indra
cannot defeat him.
As for me, the brave gods, Dānavas
and rākṣasas together

58 Cannot humble me;
how can human mahā-chariot-heroes?"
Even as Bhīṣma was saying this to Duḥśāsana,
Phālguna-Arjuna,

59 With Śikhaṇḍin as shield,
shot sharp arrows at Bhīṣma.
Bhīṣma smiled,
and said to Duḥśāsana:

60 "Arjuna is shooting
deadly thunderbolt-arrows at me
from his fierce Gāṇḍīva-bow.
They pierce me deeply.

61 They fly in a continuous stream.
They cannot be Śikhaṇḍin's.
They cut through my armour
and strike my weakest parts

62 As heavily as bludgeons.
They cannot be Śikhaṇḍin's.
They are swift as thunderbolts,
They are like adamantine thunderbolts.

63 They oppress me,
they are messengers of Yama,
they suck my life-breath,
they cannot be Śikhaṇḍin's.

64 They hit like maces,
they bite like venomous snakes
hissing balefully,
they cannot be Śikhaṇḍin's.

65 They drain my vital energies,
they cannot be Śikhaṇḍin's.
They are Arjuna's arrows,
they cannot be Śikhaṇḍin's.

66 Like baby-crabs emerging
after cannibalising their mother,
they are devouring me.
No ruler of men can hurt me so,

67 Except the brilliant ape-emblemed
Gāṇḍīva-bow-wielder Jiṣṇu-Arjuna."
Saying this, Bhīṣma stared fiercely
at the Pāṇḍavas.

68 O Bharata! He hurled a *śakti*-missile
at Pārtha-Arjuna,
who sliced it in three fragments
with three arrows.

69 O Bharata! In the presence
of all the Kaurava heroes,
Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma picked up
a burnished shield

70 And a dazzling sword,
and prepared for victory or death.
Arjuna shattered the shield
into a hundred fragments

71 Before Bhīṣma could descend from his chariot.
An incredible feat!
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira ordered
his own soldiers:

72 "Attack Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma.
You have no cause to fear him."
From all sides,
arrows, darts, spears,

73 Battle-axes, dazzling swords,
sharp long-stemmed arrows,
calf-toothed shafts and *bhalla*-arrows
converged on that single hero.

74 The Pāṇḍava ranks raised
fearful leonine victory-shouts.
Your sons also shouted
for the victory of Bhīṣma,

75 And concentrated all efforts
on Bhīṣma's defence.
A gory clash took place
between them and their enemies.

76 O Indra-among-rājās! On the tenth day of battle,
when Arjuna and Bhīṣma clashed,
the field was like the confluence
of the Gaṅgā with the ocean.

77 The field was a sheet
of blood of soldiers
locked in mutual slaughter.
A gruesome spectacle.

78 High and low levels merged
in a straight line of gore.
On the tenth day,
the killing of warriors continued

79 By Bhīṣma,
though he was critically injured.
The brilliant bowman Pārtha-Arjuna,
at the head of his soldiers,

80 Wrought havoc in the ranks
of the Kauravas.
The Pāṇḍavas and their royal allies
afflicted your soldiers
with well-aimed arrows
shot in never-ending volleys.

81 An unbelievable sight! –
their arrows succeeded
in spreading panic among all
the followers of Bhīṣma.
Kuntī's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
in his white-horsed chariot

82 Harassed us so effectively
that we fled helter-skelter.
But the Sauvīras, Kitavas, Prātyas,
Pratīcyas, Udīcyas, Mālavas,

83 Abhīṣāhas, Śūrasenas, Śibis, Vasātis,
Śālvāśrayas, Trigartas, Ambaṣṭhas and Kekayas, –

84 All these brave mahātmā heroes,
though bleeding and in agony,
did not abandon Bhīṣma
to diadem-wearing Arjuna.

85 Encircling the solitary Bhīṣma,
hordes of Pāṇḍava heroes
smashed the Kaurava defence
and pinned him down with arrows.

86 Near Bhīṣma's chariot, O rājā,
could be heard confused cries:
"Topple him!" "Seize him!"
"Cut him to pieces!"

87 And Bhīṣma, O rājā, kept slaughtering
hundreds and thousands of warriors,
though his arrow-pierced body
did not have two-fingers of exposed skin left.

88 And so, your *pitā* Bhīṣma,
riddled with Phālguna-Arjuna's arrows,
toppled from his chariot,
his head facing the east,

89 Just before sunset, while your sons watched.
As he fell, O Bharata,
cries of "Hai Hai!" from gods and earth-lords
rent the air.

90 "Bhīṣma has fallen from his chariot!"
A mahā-uproar!
With the fall of the mahātmā Pitāmaha
from his chariot,

91 The hearts of all who witnessed it
fell also.
Mahā-muscled Bhīṣma was the bravest
of brilliant bowmen –

92 And he fell
like Indra's shredded war-flag
thudding on the earth
and making it tremble,
so riddled with arrows
his body did not touch the ground.

93 That bull-brave hero,
that mahā-bowman Bhīṣma,
chariot-toppled, lay on his arrowy bed,
divinely effulgent.

94 The rain-cloud Parjanya
sent showers
the earth
trembled
Falling
Bhīṣma saw
the sun
in its southern solstice
O descendant
of Bharata

95 The time being
auspicious
Bhīṣma controlled
his senses
He heard
a divine voice

96 Saying:
Mahātmā Bhīṣma
Son of Gaṅgā
Finest of arms-experts
Disciplined and virtuous
Careful-about-Kāla –
Tiger-among-men
Why should he die
With the sun
In its southern solstice?

97 Bhīṣma heard
And whispered:
"I am still alive."
The Kuru Pitāmaha
Grancestor Bhīṣma
Willed not to die.

98 Until the arrival
Of the northern solstice
He willed to live.
Respecting his desire
Himavant's daughter
The sacred Gaṅgā

99 Sent mahārṣis disguised
As *haṁsa*-swans to Bhīṣma
To attend on him.
In the forms of swans
Of Mānasarovara
Flying in the sky

100 The ṛṣis proceeded
To the field where Bhīṣma
The Kuru Pitāmaha
Finest of men
Lay waiting for death
On his bed of arrows.

101 The swan-ṛṣis
Respectfully approached
The Kuru Pitāmaha
The enhancer of the glory
Of the Kaurava dynasty
On his bed of arrows.

102 Eyes fixed on mahātmā
Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma
They did *pradakṣiṇa*
To that best of the Bharatas
When the sun was still
In its southern solstice.

103 They looked at each other
And wisely wondered.
How is it possible
That mahātmā Bhīṣma
Should will his death
In the summer solstice?

104 Saying this the *haṁsas*
Flew to the south.
Seeing them depart
Mahā-wise Bhīṣma
O Bharata descendant
Reflected briefly

105 And addressed them saying:
"It is not my will
To give up my life
So long as the sun
Still lingers in its
Summer solstice.

106 When the sun enters
Its northern solstice
I tell you truly O swans
Only then will I enter
The ancient abode
Where I must go.

107 Till then I shall
Check my *prāṅa*-life-breath
For I have power
Of mind to decide
When to surrender
My hold on life.

108 Till then my *prāṅa*
Is in my control,
Till the northern solstice.
My mahātmā father
Gave me this boon
A long time ago

109 That I should depart
When I will to do so.
Till that time comes
Of *prāṅa*-surrender
My breaths are fully
In my control."

110 Saying this to the swans
Bhīṣma lay motionless
On his arrowy bed.
With the mahā-radiant
Kaurava crest-jewel
Bhīṣma toppled,

111 The Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas
Burst into mahā-
Paeans of victory.
With their superhuman
Mahāsattva Pitāmaha
Toppled,

112 Your sons, O bull-brave Bharata,
Stood bewildered
Not knowing what to do.
All the Kauravas
Were trapped
In perplexity.

113 Duryodhana and Kṛpa
And others stood still
Sighed and wept
Numbed with grief
Their senses paralysed
On the battlefied.

114 No more, mahārāja,
Did their minds turn
To thoughts of battle,
No rushing the Pāṇḍavas –
Their thighs were locked
In a steel vice.

115 Unslayable mahā-radiant
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma killed!
It was apparent O rājā
That the end
Of rājā Duryodhana
Was imminent.

116 Battered and butchered
By the arrows of ambidexterous
Savyasācī-Arjuna,
With all our finest
Warriors killed,
We despaired.

117 Meanwhile the Pāṇḍavas,
Victors in this life,
Were assured of heaven.
Bludgeon-strong heroes,
They stood on the field,
Shouting their delight.

118 O lord of men!
The Somakas and Pāñcālas
Shouted joyous victory-cries.
Hundreds of drums
Suddenly sounded,
And mahā-muscled

119 Bhīma slapped his arms
And screamed his joy
With leonine roars.
With the destruction
Of radiant Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma
The warriors

120 Of both armies
Laid down their weapons
And were lost in thought.
Some wept and wailed
Some roamed aimlessly
Some lost their senses.

121 Some denounced
The Kṣatriya code
Some pūjā-praised Bhīṣma
The Bharata ṛṣis and *pitṛs*
Revered the glory
Of mahā-strict-vowed Bhīṣma.

122 The Bharata elders
Honoured valiant Bhīṣma
As he lay on the arrows
Absorbed in the yoga
Enshrined in the sacred
Mahā-Upaniṣads –

123 Śāntanu's son invoking the *japa*-incantations
And waiting for his time to leave this world.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-TWENTY

1 "Tell me, Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"how did my army fare
without strictly-celibate, brahmacārī, god-like
powerful Bhīṣma?

2 When I realised that Bhīṣma was refraining
from harming Śikhaṇḍin,
I became convinced the Pāṇḍavas
would overwhelm us.

3 What greater loss could befall me
than my *pitā's* death?
He is dead – and I live.
Such is my sorry state!

4 It must be, Sañjaya, that my heart
is made of stone,
or would it not burst hearing
of Bhīṣma's death?

5 Tell me everything, strict-vowed Sañjaya.
What really happened?
How did the Kuru-lion Bhīṣma,
hopeful of victory, fall?

6 It pains me to even think
of Devavrata-Bhīṣma's slaughter.
A man whom Paraśurāma's divine weapons
could not harm –

7 Such a man, killed by that petty Pāñcāla prince,
Draupada-Śikhaṇḍin!"
Sañjaya replied: At evening, when Bhīṣma fell,
desolated were your sons,

8 And the Pāñcālas celebrated the killing
of the Kuru Pitāmaha.
He lay on the ground,
his body not touching earth.

9 When Bhīṣma was toppled from his chariot,
when he fell,
all around broke into such a tumult:
"Hai! Hai!"

10 When that noble example of the dynasty,
that *sīma-vṛksa*,
that boundary-tree, O rājā,
of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas fell,
the Kṣatriyas of both armies
were gripped by fear.

11 The Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas saw Śāntanu's son
with his flag shredded, his armour shattered;
they stopped fighting, O lord of the world,
and encircled him.

12 Darkness
shrouded
sky
Sun
shed
splendour
Earth
screamed
in pain
When Bhīṣma
Śāntanu's son
fell.

13 All there saw bull-brave Bhīṣma
supine, and said:
"He was the best of the Brahma-knowers,
surely the best.

14 To please his kāma-gripped father Śāntanu,
this bull-brave mortal
transformed himself into an *ūrdha-retasa*
semen-sublimating celibate."

15 These were the praises spoken by the ṛṣis,
Siddhas and Cāraṇas
to the glory of the Bharatas, Bhīṣma,
on his arrow-bed.

16 Your sons were in a dilemma,
O gracious monarch,
not knowing what to do, when Bhīṣma,
the Bharata Pitāmaha, fell.

17 Their faces became pale, they looked dispirited,
O Bharata,
they stood silent and ashamed,
with downcast eyes.

18 The Pāṇḍavas, however,
victorious lords of the battlefield,
blew loudly on their splendid
gold filigreed conches.

19 While thousands of instruments sounded
on the field
expressing their delight, mahārāja,
we saw mahā-powerful Bhīma

20 Leaping and dancing in joy
over the manner in which
that mahā-powerful hero had killed
countless Kaurava enemies.

21 A profound gloom spread
over the Kaurava camp.
Karṇa and Duryodhana breathed deep
and prolonged sighs.

22 When Pitāmaha Bhīṣma was toppled
from his chariot,
cries rose in a welter of despair,
"Hai! Hai!"

23 Seeing mighty Bhīṣma killed,
your son Duḥśāsana rushed
as fast as he could
to the ranks of Droṇa.

24 Tiger-among-men Duḥśāsana was specially ordered
by your son Duryodhana
to protect Bhīṣma – but now the Kaurava ranks
were demoralised.

25 Mahārāja, seeing Duḥśāsana advance,
the Kaurava soldiers
gathered round him,
curious to hear him.

26 O bull-brave Bharata!
He gave the news of Bhīṣma's death.
The shock made Droṇa fall in a faint
in his chariot,

27 But he soon recovered consciousness.
O gracious monarch,
Bhāradvāja-Droṇa ordered his soldiers
to lay down their arms.

28 Seeing the Kauravas retreating,
the Pāṇḍavas
sent messengers on swift horses
ordering a cease-fire.

29 One by one the different ranks
laid down their weapons;
the kings doffed their armour
and approached Bhīṣma.

30 Hundreds and thousands of soldiers
laid down their arms
in homage to mahātmā Bhīṣma,
like the gods venerating Prajāpati Brahmā.

31 The Kaurava and Pāṇḍava soldiers
respectfully ringed
bull-brave Bharata Bhīṣma
on his arrow-bed.

32 The Kaurava and Pāṇḍava warriors
praṇāma-ed him,
and the dharmātmā son of Śāntanu
said to them:

33 "Mahā-fortune-favoured heroes,
You are welcome.
You are welcome,
Mahā-chariot-heroes.
I am pleased to have your darshan."

34 He said this,
and his head fell back again.
Head slumped, he said:
"My head droops.
I need a pillow."

35 The kings hurriedly fetched
soft
comfortable
elegant pillows –
but Pitāmaha Bhīṣma refused them.

36 Tiger-among-men Bhīṣma smiled
and said to the kings:
"Lords of the earth,
these pillows are not for a hero's head."

37 He looked at Arjuna,
finest of men,
finest of all mahā-chariot-heroes in the three worlds,
long-armed Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
and he said:

38 "Mahā-muscled Dhanañjaya,
tāta, dear one,
my head droops.
You will know the best pillow for me.
Get me one."

39 Arjuna revered the Pitāmaha,
strung his mahā-bow
and said,
with tears filming his eyes:

40 "O greatest of all the Kauravas,
foremost of all weapons-wielders,
what is your will?
O invulnerable one, command me!
How can I be of service to you, Pitāmaha?

41 Śāntanu's son said:
"*Tāta*! Dear one! My head droops.
Phālguna-Arjuna! Finest of the Kauravas!
I need a pillow.

42 Fetch me a pillow quickly
that goes with this bed.
Only you can do this, Pārtha-Arjuna,
for you are the greatest of all bowmen.

43 You know a Kṣatriya's dharma,
you are intelligent,
honest and many-talented."
Saying "It will be done",
Phālguna-Arjuna prepared himself for the task.

44 He pulled taut the Gāṇḍīva-bow
fitted knotted arrows in it,
chanted mantras,
obtained the mahā-chariot-hero Bhīṣma's permission,

45 And shot three swift arrows
that propped up Bhīṣma's head.
Seeing that ambidexterous Arjuna
had correctly understood him, dharmātmā

46 Best-of-the-Bharatas Bhīṣma,
who knew the essence of dharma-and-artha,
was pleased with Arjuna;
he praised Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
for providing the pillow.

47 He looked at all the Bharata warriors,
and said to the finest of them,
Kuntī's son Arjuna,
the enhancer of the delight of his friends:

48 "Pāṇḍu's son,
this is indeed the pillow
that goes with my bed.
Had you provided anything else,
I would have angrily cursed you.

49 O mahā-muscled hero,
a Kṣatriya who sleeps on the battlefield
lies on a bed of arrows:
such is his dharma."

50 Having spoken to dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
he turned his head
towards the assembled rājās and princes
and said:

51 “Look –
here is the pillow
Pāṇḍu’s son has given me.
I will lie on this bed until the sun
arrives in its northern solstice.

52 The kings who then come
to see me,
when the day-making sun
proceeds to the northern regions of Kubera

53 On his swift seven-horsed chariot,
will see me bid farewell
to my life-breath,
like a friend bidding farewell
to a dear friend.

54 Dig a trench all around me, kings.
Riddled with arrows,
I will lie here
and offer my homage to the sun.

55 Lords of the earth, cease fighting,
forget your hatreds.”
There came to the field
(continued Sañjaya)
trained surgeons skilled in removing shafts,

56 Bringing with them soothing lotions
and the finest medical appliances.
Seeing them, Jāhnavī-Gaṅgā’s son Bhīṣma
said to Duryodhana:

57 “Welcome them,
and honour them with pūjā-respect,
pay them well, and let them go.
I do not need surgeons.

58 I have attained the ultimate goal
recommended in Kṣatriya-dharma.
It is not my dharma now
to get these arrows extracted.

59 When I depart, O rulers of men,
I will take these arrows with me."
Hearing this,
your son Duryodhana

60 Honoured the surgeons with pūjā-respect
and requested them to leave.
The rulers of the various territories
were struck with wonder

61 At supremely-disciplined Bhīṣma's
firmness in dharma.
Offering the pillow to your *pitā*,
all the kings,

62 Along with the mahā-chariot-heroes
of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas,
again approached mahātmā Bhīṣma
as he lay on his shining bed of arrows.

63 They revered him by thrice
doing *pradakṣiṇa*,
and returned to their camps
after arranging for his security.

64 Their bodies were stained with blood,
and they looked preoccupied and depressed
at that sunset hour.

65 The Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes
were gathered in one place
discussing and celebrating
the fall of Bhīṣma, when mahā-powerful

66 Mādhava-Krishna arrived and said
to Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira:
"You are fortunate to have won,
fortunate that Bhīṣma has fallen –

67 Bhīṣma, the never-failing impeccable bowman,
the unexcelled mahā-chariot-hero,
master of all śāstras,
incapable of being defeated even by the gods,

68 Bhīṣma who could destroy others
has been destroyed by a single fierce glance from you."
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira listened and replied
to punisher-of-people Janārdana-Krishna:

69 "Your grace brings victory,
your displeasure brings defeat.
You are our refuge, Krishna,
we are your grateful fear-free *bhaktas.*

70 Why should victory come as a surprise
to those, Keśava-Krishna, whom you protect,
whose welfare is your constant concern?

71 With you on our side,
nothing comes to me as a surprise."
Janārdana-Krishna smiled.
He said, "Excellent earth-ruler,
these words are expected from you."

SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-ONE

1 The night passed, mahārāja,
(continued Sañjaya)
and the Pāṇḍava and Kaurava earth-lords
went to Pitāmaha-Bhīṣma.

2 O unexcelled Kaurava! The Kṣatriya heroes
honoured the bull-brave Kṣatriya
who lay on a hero's bed,
and stood near him.

3 Thousands of young girls covered the body
of Śāntanu's son
with sandalwood powder, paddy grains
and garlands of flowers.

4 Women, old men, children and others
approached the son of Śāntanu,
like the world's creatures facing
the rising sun.

5 Trumpeters, mimics, actors, dancers and artisans,
in thousands,
flocked to the respectworthy Pitāmaha
of the Kauravas.

6 They cast off their armour
and relinquished their weapons,
they left off fighting,
the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas,

7 And together approached the foe-crusher,
invincible Devavrata-Bhīṣma.
As in the past, they conversed freely
and as friends.

8 That congregation of Bharata kings,
with Bhīṣma gracing it,
looked as enchanting
as the maṇḍala of the sun.

9 And the gathering of kings
paying homage to Gaṅgā's son
was as beautiful as the gods venerating
Pitāmaha Brahmā himself.

10 O bull-brave Bharata! Bhīṣma lay there,
patiently enduring the agony
of his arrow-riddled body,
breathing heavily like a snake.

11 His body was on fire with the pain
of the arrows.
He felt faint. He saw the rājās.
He whispered, "Water."

12 O rājā! All the assembled Kṣatriyas
quickly placed
excellent food before him, and, O rājā,
jars of cool water.

13 Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma looked
at the jars of water
and said, "No more human food for me,
not from today.

14 I have left human society,
I lie on a bed of arrows,
waiting for changes in the courses
of the sun and the moon."

15 Saying this, he looked at the earth-lords,
O Bharata descendant,
as if rebuking them, and said,
"I wish to see Arjuna."

16 Mahā-muscled Arjuna approached
and did *prāñjali*;
palms pressed in humble respect, he asked,
"What is your desire?"

17 O rājā! Dharmātmā Bhīṣma looked
at Pāṇḍava Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
standing with folded palms, and, pleased,
he said:

18 "My body is riddled with your arrows.
It hurts.
My mouth is dry.
Terrible pain afflicts my vital parts.

19 Such pain in this body, Arjuna!
I need water.
Only you, O mahā-bowman,
can give me what I need."

20 Valiant Arjuna said "Yes",
and climbed into his chariot.
He strung his Gāṇḍīva bow,
and pulled it taut.

21 The twang of his bow
and the slap of his arms
thundered. The soldiers and earth-lords
shook in fear.

22 The unexcelled chariot-hero Arjuna
did *pradakṣiṇa*
around prostrate Bhīṣma, finest of the Bharatas,
finest of weapon-wielders,

23 And, fixing a radiant arrow,
charged with mantras
the Pārjanya-shaft
in the presence of everyone there,

24 And pierced the ground
to the right of Bhīṣma,
A clear jet of pure, auspicious water
gushed up,

25 Sweet as *amṛta*-nectar
and scented with sacred rasa.
With that cool jet of water
Pāṇḍu's son Pārtha-Arjuna slaked

26 The thirst of illustrious god-like Bhīṣma,
finest of the Kauravas.
Observing that feat of Pārtha-Arjuna,
who resembled Śakra-Indra,

27 The whole earth was wonderstruck.
That superhuman feat
of Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
the doer of dreadful deeds,

28 Made the Kauravas shiver
like cows in severe wintry cold.
In amazement they began flapping
their body-garments.

29 *Dundubhi*-drums sounded, conches blew:
the tumult was tremendous.
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma, O rājā,
pleased with Bībhatsu-Arjuna, said,

30 Pūjā-praising him in front
of the assembled earth-rulers:
"From you, O mahā-muscled delight of the Kurus,
this is no great feat,

31 For Nārada has equated you to an ancient ṛṣi,
O illimitably radiant one!
You have Vāsudeva-Krishna as your ally,
your mahā-karma

32 Is beyond the powers of even Devendra-Indra
and his gods.
Those who know, see you, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
as the Exterminator of all Kṣatriyas.

33 You are indisputably the most brilliant
Bowman among the world's humans.

34 Among created beings,
man is supreme;
Among birds,
Garuḍa;
Among water-bodies,
the ocean;
Among four-legged animals,
the cow;

35 Among the luminaries,
the sun;
Among mountains,
the Himālayas;
Among castes,
the Brahmin;
Among bowmen,
it is you.

36 The counsels I offered,
with Vidura, Droṇa,
Paraśurāma, Janārdana-Krishna,
and Sañjaya, not once
but again and again,
were ignored by the Kauravas.

37 Deprived of his reason,
like a conscience-less man,
Duryodhana refused
to listen to me.
Now, mangled by Bhīma,
he will sleep on this field."

38 This verdict of Bhīṣma
disheartened the Indra-
of-the-Kurus Duryodhana.
But Bhīṣma said,
looking at him "O rājā!
Discard your anger.

[VI:121:39-48]

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39 You saw, Duryodhana,
how intelligent Pārtha-Arjuna created
the jet of cool, fragrant, *amṛta*-sweet water.

40 No one else in the universe can do what he did.
The Āgneya, Vāruṇa, Saumya, Vāyavya, Vaiṣṇava,

41 Aindra, Pāśupata, Brāhma, Pārameṣṭhya, Prajāpata,
Dhātu, Tvaṣṭu, Savitu and Vaivasvata

42 Are weapons known in the world of men
to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna only,
And to Devakī's son Krishna –
and no one else.

43 *Tāta*! Dear one!
Pāṇḍava Arjuna cannot be vanquished;
the mahātmā who displays
such superhuman qualities,

44 Whose patience and valour
are only too well-known, –
O rājā, with such a man
you should immediately make peace.

45 So long as mahā-muscled Krishna keeps aloof,
you have a chance,
tatā, dear one, to make peace
with Pārtha-Arjuna.

46 *Tāta*! Dear one! Till such time
as Arjuna targets your army
with his fierce knotted arrows,
you can still make peace with him.

47 Your brothers are still alive,
these kings are still alive;
they have survived so far, O rājā,
so do not delay the peace.

48 So long as Yudhiṣṭhira
does not angrily destroy your army,
tāta, dear one,
there is scope for peace.

49 So long as Nakula and Sahadeva
and Pāṇḍava-Bhīmasena
do not devastate your army,
mahārāja, there is scope for peace.

50 Nothing will please me more than peace
between your heroes and the Pāṇḍava heroes.
I have fallen. Let the war end too!
Tāta! Dear me! Make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.

51 May my advice find favour with you.
O faultless one!
Peace will be fruitful for your future
and the future of your dynasty.

52 Renounce your wrath!
Make peace with the Pāṇḍavas!
Enough is enough!
Enough of killing
by Phālguna-Arjuna!
Be happy for once!
Let the fall of Bhīṣma
be the basis of peace!
Let your soldiers live!

53 Let half of your kingdom
go to the Pāṇḍavas.
Let Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
return to Indraprastha.
Let no one despise you
for evil designs.
Let no one accuse you
of fomenting hatred
between friend and friend.

54 And when I depart,
let peace be enjoyed
by your people.
Let kings embrace kings.
Let father make peace
with son, maternal uncle
make peace with nephew,
let brother make peace
with brother, O rāja.

55 If, influenced by folly
or wicked misjudgment,
you reject my advice,
you will regret it later,
All, all will perish!
I am speaking the truth."

56 Inspired by affection,
Bhīṣma offered Duryodhana
this advice before the rājās,
and lapsed into silence.
He was dying, slowly,
but he kept calm.

57 Your son heard these words of dharma-and-artha
(continued Sañjaya)
but he rejected them,
like a dying man refusing medicine.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-TWO

1 Mahārāja, after Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
finished speaking
(continued Sañjaya), the earth-rulers returned
to their tents.

2 Hearing that Bhīṣma had been toppled,
bull-brave Rādheya-Karṇa, worried,
hurried to where the grandsire lay
on his arrowy-bed.

3 He saw mahātmā Bhīṣma
on his bed of arrows,
like *prabhu* Kārtikeya lying on a bed of reeds
after his birth.

4 Valiant Bhīṣma's eyes were closed.
Mahā-radiant Karṇa approached him;
his voice choking, his eyes filled with tears.
"Bhīṣma! Bhīṣma! O mahā-muscled one!"

5 He said. "I am Rādhā's son Karṇa.
O most excellent of all the Kauravas!
Whenever you looked at me,
you looked at me with contempt."

6 The venerable elder Kaurava Bhīṣma heard,
slowly opened his eyes,
dismissed the guards,
and said tenderly,

7 Embracing Karṇa with one arm
as a father embraces a son,
on that desolate field of battle.
Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma said:

8 "Come near me. You have always dared me.
We must get to knew each other.
It is good for you that you have decided
to come here.

9 Rādheya! You are not Rādhā's son.
You are Kuntī's son, Kaunteya.
Your father is not Adhiratha.
You are the son of Sūrya.
O mahā-muscled one! Nārada has told me all,

10 So has island-born -Kṛṣṇā-Dvaīpayana-Vyāsa.
This is the truth then.
Tāta! Child, I have never disliked you.
Believe me, this is true.

11 Holy-vowed one, I spoke to you harshly
only to keep you in check,
for you needlessly
used to harass the Pāṇḍavas.

12 You and rājā Duryodhana provoked the Pāṇḍavas.
Your birth was a departure from dharma.
Your understanding is therefore warped.
You think you are a charioteer's son, O Sūta-nandana.

13 You mix with the mean,
you are jealous of the noble.
That is why I spoke harshly to you
in the gathering of the Kauravas.

14 I know you are a terror to your foes.
I know you honour Brahmins and are supremely generous.

15 O god-like hero, there is none
in the world of humans
to equal you.
I spoke harshly to you
because I wanted to prevent dissensions
in the family.

16 In bowcraft,
in fixing and aiming arrows,
in dexterity,
in the impact of your weapons,
you are the equal of Phālguna-Arjuna
and mahātmā Krishna.

17 Karṇa,
in Kāśi, singlehanded,
with just a bow,
you humbled the other rājās
when you were seeking a bride
for Kuru-rājā Duryodhana.

18 Even never-defeated rājā Jarāsaṁdha,
an immensely powerful hero,
had to concede victory to you.

19 You respect Brahmins,
you fight fair.
In skill and strength you equal a god,
and are superior to men.

20 The bitterness I felt for you previously
I do not feel now.
Human effort must accept the inevitable.

21 Mahā-muscled hero, if you wish to please me,
make peace with the Pāṇḍava heroes.
They are your own brothers, O foe-crusher.

22 Son of the sun! Āditya-nandana!
Let all rancour end
with my death!
Let the rājās of the earth
be free from fear and pain."

23 “Mahā-muscled one,” Karṇa replied,
“I am aware of all this.
I do not disbelieve you, Bhīṣma.
I am not the son of a charioteer,
I am Kuntī’s son.

24 But Kuntī abandoned me,
a charioteer brought me up.
I have been friendly with Duryodhana.
‘Whatever difficult work is to be done,
I will do it for you’ –

25 This promise I made Suyodhana-Duryodhana.
I have received his favours –
I cannot betray him in crisis.

26 Like Vasudeva’s son Krishna
who is vow-determined to help the Pāṇḍavas –
my wealth, my body, my sons, my wife, my honour,

27 I will sacrifice them all if necessary
for Duryodhana’s sake.
O Bhīṣma, you who offer large *dakṣiṇās*,
it is in order to save Kṣatriyas from dying of
doddering disease

28 That I have chosen to serve Suyodhana-Duryodhana
and angrily oppose the Pāṇḍavas.
What will happen, will happen.
Who can stop it from happening?

29 Who overcomes fate
by struggling against it?
O Pitāmaha! Many omens indicating
the desolation of the world

30 Were seen by you – and described by you
in the gathering of the Kauravas.
I know that Vāsudeva-Krishna
and the sons of Pāṇḍu

31 Cannot be defeated by others –
that is why I chose
to fight against them.
I am determined to defeat them
on the battlefield.

32 This is a bitter fight to the end
between us and the Pāṇḍavas.
My sva-dharma is sweet and simple:
I will fight Dhañanjaya-Arjuna.

33 My mind is made up: I will fight.
Tāta! Respected one!
That being so, favour me
with your permission.
O valiant hero!
I need your permission to fight.

34 Also, favour me with your forgiveness
if I have spoken any harsh word
against you,
if I have harmed you deliberately
or carelessly."

35 Bhīṣma said:
"If you cannot cast off
this terrible hatred
of the Pāṇḍavas,
very well, then: you have my permission, Karṇa.
Fight, hoping for heaven.

36 Carry out your orders,
without anger or malice;
do the best you can,
employ all your śakti,
consistent with your conscience.

37 You have my permission.
May you attain what you seek to attain.
With Dhanañjaya-Arjuna as agent,
you will achieve the realm
that is the reward
of a Kṣatriya who follows his dharma.

38 But discard your *ahaṁkāra*-arrogance.
Rely on your own power and skill –
and fight!
What is more desirable to a Kṣatriya
than a war of dharma?

39 I tried mahā hard and long enough
to bring about peace.
I have failed.
This is the truth, Karṇa."

40 Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma said this (said Sañjaya).
Rādhā's son Karṇa honoured him,
mounted his chariot
and galloped off to the tent
of your son Duryodhana.

This internationally accepted system of Roman transliteration of the Devanāgari alphabet is followed in this Transcreation.

VOWELS

Guttural	अ	आ
	a	ā
Palatal	इ	ई
	i	ī
Labial	उ	ऊ
	u	ū
Dental	ऋ	
	ṛ	
Guttural-Palatal	ए	ऐ
	e	ei
Guttural-Labial	ओ	औ
	o	au

CONSONANTS

Guttural	क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	ह	:
	k	kh	g	gh	ṅ	h	ḥ
Palatal	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ	य	श
	c	ch	j	jh	ñ	y	ś
Lingual	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	र	ष
	ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ	r	ṣ
Dental	त	थ	द	ध	न	ल	स
	t	th	d	dh	n	l	s
Labial	प	फ	ब	भ	म	व	
	p	ph	b	bh	m	v	

Anusvāra = ṁ

C O N T E N T S

CANTO VI

Bhismaparva

The Chronicle of War : Book One

Courtesy:

Madhusraba Dasgupta

Samsad Companion to the Mahābhārata

(Sahitya Samsad, Kolkata, 1999)

Vyāsa Mahābhārata Kathā Library

V Y Ā S A   M A H Ā B H Ā R A T Ā   K A T H Ā   L I B R A R Y

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa is a cornucopious treasure house of stories. WRITERS WORKSHOP is bringing out a series of kathās from the mahā-epic, in the śloka-by-śloka English transcreation by P. Lāl. Each volume will carry a brief (around 800 words) synopsis of the tale and information about its protagonists. Most of the volumes will also have a preface by Pradip Bhattacharya (again brief, around 1,000 words) on the "deeper meaning" of each kathā, concerning its symbolism, myth and metaphoric interpretation. The Scaffolding and the Significance – in this two pronged presentation WRITERS WORKSHOP plans to explore, through Vyāsa's imagination and itihāsa-retelling, the riches of the ancient Indian tradition of Suta story-weaving. Story and history, tale and detail, vision and revision coalesce in this entertaining and illuminating journey through a civilisation that communicated lasting values and ideals by vivid oral means. All the volumes are scheduled for publication in 2007. Special Advance Subscription for all 12 volume: Rs 2400.

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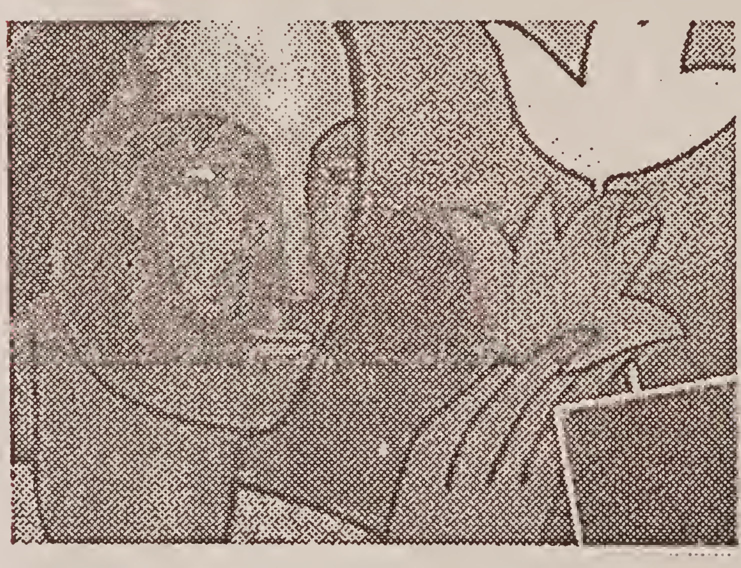


P. Lāl reading the 334th weekly Sunday session of his English transcreation of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata on 2 July 2006 at G. D. Birla Sabhagar, Kolkata.

[*Sketch by Nilima Sen-Gangopadhyay*]

HINDUSTAN TIMES

Kolkata Calendar



A solo exhibition of paintings by Sanju Manna will be on from December 25 to January 1

READING SESSION

GD Birla Sabhagar

Professor P Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarashtra of deeply disturbed Yudhisthira ordering Bhima to reinforce Arjuna and Satyaki on Kurukshetra, Bhima's slaughter of eleven sons of Dhritarashtra, and the retreat of eleven other sons, in the 354th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of the complete *Mahabharata* of Vyasa, presented by Sankriti Sagar on December 25 at 11 am.

THE TELEGRAPH

READING

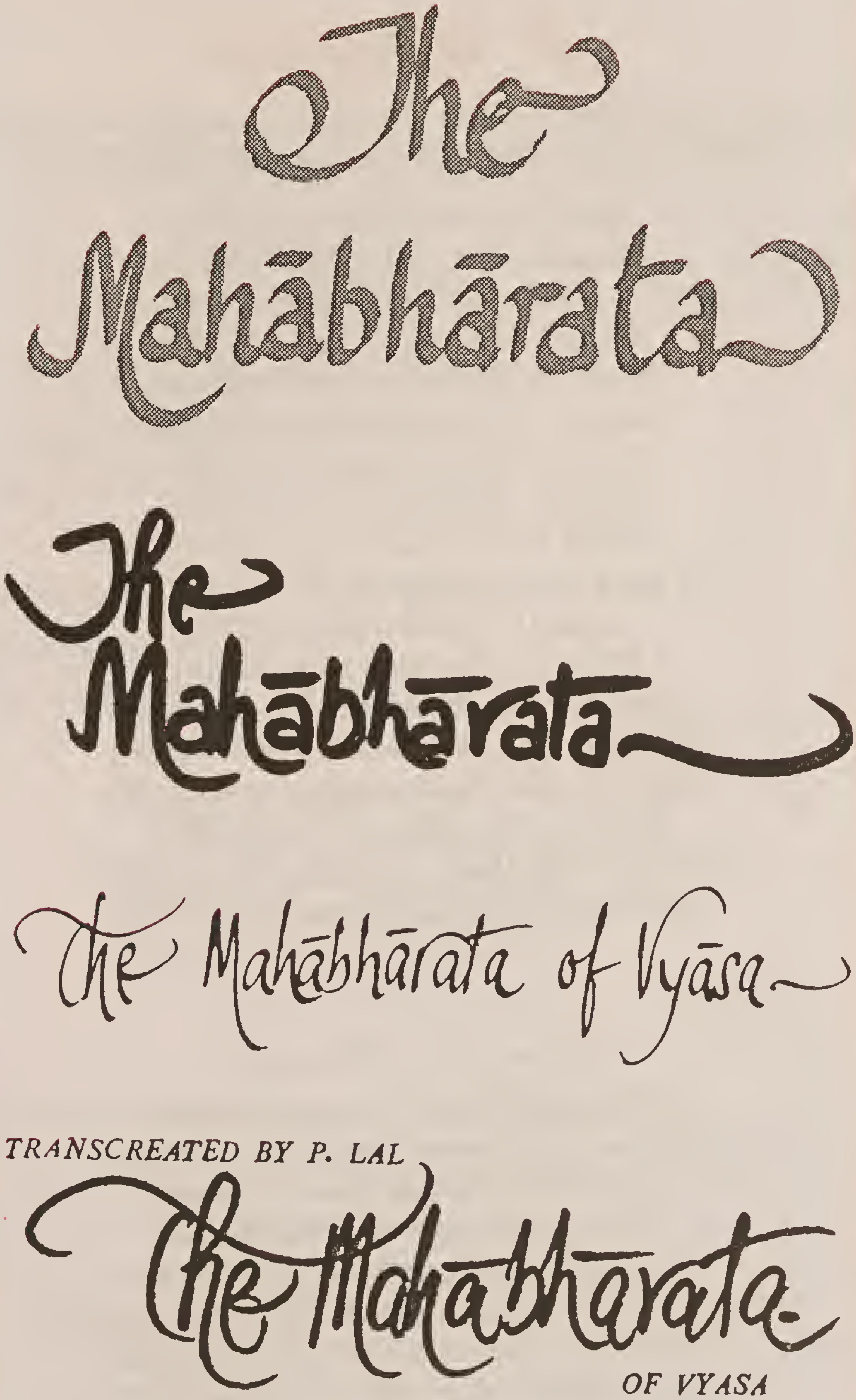
■ **December 24 at G.D. Birla Sabhagar; 11 am:** Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of Yudhisthira ordering Bhima to reinforce Arjuna and Satyaki, Bhima's slaughter of 11 sons of Dhritarastra and the retreat of 11 other sons, in the 354th weekly session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's *Mahabharata*.

The Sunday Statesman

WHAT'S ON

ENGAGEMENTS

■ Prof. P. Lal reads Yudhisthira ordering Bhima to penetrate the Kauravaranks on Kuruksetra in the 354th session of his English transcreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata at G.D. Birla Sabhagar, 11-00



The evolution of wrap-around title-flaps of P. Lāl's monthly Mahābhārata fascicules of the Sabhā Parva that appeared from WRITERS WORKSHOP in 1969-1970 as hardbound volumes 27-37.

ॐ The Mahābhārata

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The Complete Mahābhārata transcreated by P. Lāl

Book 1 : The Ādi Parva (2005)
Book 2 : The Sabhā Parva (2005)
Book 3 : The Vana Parva (2005)
Book 4 : The Virāṭa Parva (2006)
Book 5 : The Udyoga Parva (2006)
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Book 17 : The Mahāprasthānika Parva (2006)
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Appearing from WW in 2007

Prefaces & Notes to Vyāsa's Ādi Parva
Prefaces and Notes to Vyāsa's Sabhā Parva
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Śakuntalā Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Yayāti Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Mandapāla Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Draupadī-Svayamvara Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Sāvitrī-Satyavān Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Nala-Damayantī Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Śiśupāla-Vadha Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Yakṣa-Yudhiṣṭhira Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Rāmāyaṇa Kathā

TRANSCREATOR'S NOTE

An interesting exchange between Dr. Pradip Bhattacharya, Sri A. Harindranath and Sri Purushottaman Avaroth on the internet Mahabharata website is concerned with my transcreation of an important śloka in the Ādi Parva. (Since mine is the "ragbag" complete all-recensions edition, the section and śloka reference is different from the Poona and Bengal).

The Poona Bhandarkar Critical Edition:

> नातश्चतुर्थं प्रसवमापत्स्वपि वदन्त्युत।
> अतः परं चारिणी स्यात्पञ्चमे बन्धकी भवेत्॥
>
> (Ādi | 114:65)

The Bengal (Calcutta) Devanāgari Recension (1834-39):

> नातश्चतुर्थं प्रसवमापत्स्वपि वदन्त्युत।
> अतः परं स्वैरिणी स्याद् बन्धकी पञ्चमे भवेत्॥
>
> (Ādi | 123: 77)

> The wise do not sanction
> a fourth conception, even in crisis.
> The woman who has intercourse
> for a fourth is a loose woman.
> The woman who has intercourse
> for a fourth is a prostitute. [123:83]
> (P. Lal. Ādi, p. 627)

There are four key words here. *Cāriṇi* means "walking, wandering about", *svairiṇī* means "going one's own way", so "headstrong" or "self-willed" in the sense of "loose" seems to be a reasonably satisfactory English equivalent. *Bandhakī* has only one meaning: "unchaste woman, harlot, courtesan, prostitute." *Prasava* means "conception" or "giving birth" which permits, surely, of my using "intercourse", since that is clearly what Pāṇḍu has in mind when he addresses Kuntī. The error is in the last line, where the unambiguous Sanskrit *pañcama* (five) has mysteriously became "fourth". The correct version should be:

> The woman who has intercourse
> for a fifth is a prostitute.

(Kunti has only four "conceptions": Karṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna.)

The Mahabharata of Vyasa

Condensed from Sanskrit & transcreated into English by P. Lal

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A MAJOR PUBLISHING EVENT

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa

BOOK TEN

TRANSCREATED FROM THE SANSKRIT

BY

P. Lal

&

Nandini Nopany

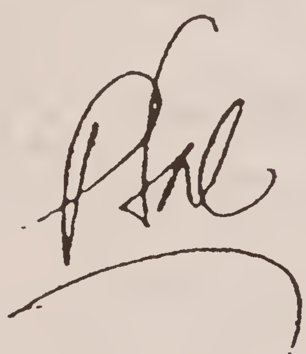
A WRITERS WORKSHOP PUBLICATION

162/92 Lake Gardens Kolkata 700 045 India

The Bhāgavat Purāṇa is traditionally attributed to Vyāsa, the compiler-cum-composer of *The Mahābhārata*. The focal figure of *The Mahabhārata* is Krishna on Kuruksetra; the focal figure of *The Bhāgavata Puraṇa* is Krishna of Gokula, Mathura and Vṛndāvana. The Itihāsa and the Purāṇa together complete the personality of Krishna: baby Krishna (Krishna-Gopāla) romantic and mystic Krishna (Krishna of the Rāsa-Lila) and Krishna on the battlefield of life (Pārthasārathi in the Bhagavad-Gitā).

The sweetness of bhakti, compassion and divine grace is the rasa of this Purāṇa, and the essence of this rasa is in the Tenth Book, whose core is the magical, mystical moonlit dance of the Rāsa-Lilā in the garden of Vṛndāvana. Lyricism, in fact, pervades all of Book Ten, which is why the major postion of this transcreation is in verse. The *vers* is *libre*, but the melodic line is given emphasis. The lyrical beauty should emerge from the heard not the read word.

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Sketch by P. Lal



Ārya-varta
at the time of the Mahābhārata

Sketch by P. Lal based on *The Historical Atlas of South Asia*
[University of Minnesota]

The Mahabha

Atri

Soma (Chand

B

N

Y

marries Dev

(The Yadava race)

Yayati marries Devayani

↓

Yadu (& another son Anu)

↓

Vrishni (son)

↓

Devarata (son)

↓

Andhaka (son)

↓

Shura (son)

Vasudeva (son) — Kunti (daughter) marries Pandu

Vasudeva (son) → Balarama (son) — Krishna (son) marries Satyabhama — Subhadra (daughter) marries Arjuna

Subhadra and Arjuna ↓ Abhimanyu (son)

Krishna ↓ Samba (son of Jambavati)

Balarama, Samba → (Line extinct)

(Satyavati'
union with th
has sons
Vichitraviry

Dhritarashtra
(son by Ambika)
↓
marries Gandhari
↓
Duryodhana
& ninetynine sons
& a daughter
Duhshala

Dhritarashtra — by union with a Vaishya woman
↓
Yuyutsu
(youngest son)

Pandu
marries K
↓
Yudhishthir
Dharm
Bhima (son b
Arjuna (son b
Arjuna marri

Sketch by Srimati Lal

Family Tree

?ishi

lu) the Moon

.)

on)

1)
Sharmishtha

(The Paurava & Kaurava race)

Yayati marries Sharmishtha
↓
Puru (& 2 other sons: Druhyu & Turvasu)
↓
Dushyanta (son) marries Shakuntala
↓
Bharata (son)
↓
Hastin (son)
↓
Kuru (son)
↓
Shantanu (son) marries Satyavati

e-marriage union with Ganga
↓
Bhishma (son)

sa
her pre-marriage
'arashara: Vyasa
wo widows of
ka & Ambalika)

Chitrangada
(son) (dies childless)

Vichitravirya (son)
marries Ambika & Ambalika
(their eldest sister Amba,
reborn male as Shikhandin,
kills Bhishma in the war)

Ambalika)

Vidura (son by
low caste woman)

and

Madri
↓
Nakula & Sahadeva
(twin sons by Ashvins)

)

ıdra

ıyu (son) marries Uttara
↓
Parikshit (son)
↓
Janamejaya (son)



The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

Transcreated from Sanskrit
by P. Lal

On the following pages are facsimile reproductions of pages from different Mahābhārata fascicules (#85-132) of the Bhiṣma Parva, showing the Sanskrit notes and extensive revisions and additions by P. Lal. These were prepared for the reading sessions of the transcreation, presented under the auspices of the Sanskriti Sagar in the Library of Dharma and Culture at the G. D. Birla Sabhagar in Kolkata. Started in October 1999, P. Lal has so far (April 2007) read 370 one-hour sessions, followed by question-and-answer periods of up to half an hour.

13 And I will arrange to circulate the glory of the
of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas everywhere.
So do not grieve.

14 O tiger-among-men, such is destiny.
So do not grieve.
It is inevitable. As for victory — victory is
where dharma is."

15 Having said this (continued Vaiśampāyana)
the fortune-favoured
the holy grandfather of the Kurus, added
... to Dhṛtarāṣṭra :

...ārāja, there will be a great carnage
...n the battlefield.
... seen many omens that indicate
...rrible disaster.

..., vultures, crows, cranes, and *kaṅkas*
...n be seen
...ng on tree-tops everywhere in
...rge numbers.

...l at the prospect of battle, these birds
stare at the field.
Flesh-eating creatures will feast on dead
elephants and horses.

19 Fearful *kaṅkas*, birds of ill omen, wheel
across the centre
of the field and fly southwards, screaming
as they turn.

20 O great Bharata, at the *saṃdhyā*-twilights
of morning and evening
I see the rising and setting sun obscured
by headless trunks.

21 The sun at both *saṃdhyās*
is obscured
with three lightning-charged clouds
that look like bludgeons :
their edges
are white and red,
their middle black.

22 I see the sun and the moon and the stars
ablaze !
I see them at night
equally ablaze !
I see all this in the day,
I see all this at night.
Calamity !

23 On the fifteenth full-moon night of the bright fortnight
in the month of Kārtikeya,
I see the moon splendourless,
It is invisible,
Or else it blazes in the lotus-blue sky.

24 They will all be killed.
They will sleep like a shroud on the earth —
all the lords of the earth,
the rājās and the sons of rājās,
the brave ones with arms like maces.

25 Every day, at night, I see in the sky
wild boars and wildcats
screaming and fighting.

26 I see the icons of goddesses
trembling
smiling
vomiting blood
disintegrating
toppling.

5 South of the Niṣadha is the territory
known as the
Hiraṇmaya through which flows the river
called Hairaṇvati.

6 Mahārāja, that is where Garuḍa, rājā-of-birds, lives.
The people there are handsome and wealthy
yakṣa-followers.

7 O rājā, they are powerful and contented.
It is said,
that the life-span of each person there is
eleven thousand

8 And five hundred years. O lord of men,
there is a
mountain the Śṛṅgavat, that has three
lovely peaks.

9 One is made of gold, another is made
of precious stones,
and the third consists of magnificently
constructed mansions.

10 The self-luminous devī named Śāṇḍilī
lives there.
North of the Śṛṅgavat, and as far as
the ocean,

11 Is the territory known as Airāvata,
superior to all.
The sun does not heat it, men do not
suffer decay.

12 It is lit by the light of the moon
and the stars.
Its people are lotus-skinned, and
lotus-eyed.

13 They have the fragrance of lotuses.
They eat nothing,
they roam, fragrant, self-controlled, with
unblinking eyes

14 They are the descendants of the gods,
they are defeetless.
O lord of the world, it is said thirteen
thousand years.

15 Is the average life-span of each person
in that region.
North of the ocean of sweet-milk
lives the lord,
eternal Viṣṇu who rides on his
golden chariot.

16 It has eight wheels, and supernatural beings
ride in it ; th
dazzles like fire ; it is swift, and ornamented
with *jambū*-gold.

17 O bull of the Bharatas !
He is the lord
He is the prosperous one !
He is finite, and he is infinite!
He is the doer, and he is the instrument !

18 He is earth
water
ether
air
fire
He is the yajña of all creatures,
The sacred fire is his mouth."

19 O raja, listening to these words of Saṃjaya
(Vaiśaṃpāyana continued),

यथागुणबलं चापि त्रिवर्गस्य महाफलम् ।
दुह्येत धेनुः कामधुग् भूमिः सम्यगनुष्ठिता ॥
22

[V : 9 / 71 - 76] The P. Lāl Transcreation

26 DECEMBER 2004

Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's account of the life-span of humans in the Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali yugas, and the characteristics of the ideal territory of Shaka island, forewarning Dhritarashtra of the total destruction of Bharata-varsa if the Kuruksetra battle takes place, in the 258th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English Transcreation of the Mahabharata of Vyasa, at G. D. Birla Sabhagar on 26 December 2004 at 11 a.m.

75 And they cannot be satisfied.
The Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas will employ
Negotiation, trickery, placation through gifts, and war
To achieve their ambition.

76 But if this earth is graciously treated,
O ~~best of men,~~ bull-brave hero,
She is the father
the mother
the children
the sky
the heaven
of all creatures."

सारमेया यथामिषम्
राजानो भरतश्रेष्ठ भोक्तुकामा वसुन्धराम् ।
न चापि तृप्तिः कामानां विद्यतेऽद्यापि कस्यचित् ॥74॥
तस्मात् परिग्रहे भूमेर्यतन्ते कुरुपाण्डवाः ।
साम्ना भेदेन दानेन दण्डेनैव च भारत ॥75॥
पिता माता च पुत्राश्च खं द्यौश्च नरपुङ्गव ।
भूमिर्भवति भूतानां सम्यगच्छिद्रदर्शिनी ॥76॥

SECTION 10

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"The dwellers of Bhārata-varṣa and Haimata-varṣa —
Their merits and defects,
Their span of life and their capabilities,

2 Their past, present, and future —
Explain everything to me, Saṃjaya.
And explain everything about the dwellers of Hari-varṣa as well."

3 Saṃjaya replied:
O bull of the Bhāratas,
Four yugas dominate Bhārata-varṣa:
Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali.

4 The first is Kṛta-yuga;
Then comes Tretā, followed by Dvāpara,
And, finally, Kali.

5 Excellent Kaurava, finest of rājās,
Ideal life-span in the Kṛta-yuga
Is four thousand years.

6 In Tretā it is three thousand.
In the present yuga, the Dvāpara,
It is two thousand years.

7 O bull of the Bharatas,
There is no fixed life-span in the Kali-yuga.
Children die in wombs,
Or immediately after birth.

8 Hundreds and thousands of human beings,
Tremendously strong and good and wise,
Possessing all the guṇas, are born

What chance have we of victory
against Bhīṣma ?"

अमित्रहा 6 Foe-annihilating Arjuna said confidently
to Yudhiṣṭhira,
Kunti's son, who was lost in grief,
reassuring him :

7 "A handful of men, if they employ
the right guna-strategy,
can rout hordes of enemies. O lord of the world!
Let me explain.

विशाम्पते

न तथा बलवीर्याभ्यां
जयन्ति विजिगीषवः ।
यथा सत्यानृशंस्याभ्यां
धर्मेणैवोद्यमेन च ॥

त्यक्त्वाधर्मं च लोभं च मोहं
चोद्यममास्थिताः ।
युध्यध्वमनहंकारा
यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः ॥

एवं राजन् विजानीहि
ध्रुवोऽस्माकं रणे जयः ।
यथा तु नारद प्राह
यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः ॥

dge,
a rājā,
Bhīṣma,
his.

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is
ā advised

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uma

tory is

गुणभूतो जयः कृष्णे पृष्ठतोऽभ्येति माधवम् ।
तद् यथा विजयश्चास्य सन्नतिश्चापरो गुणः ॥

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VI : 21 | 13 - 17] 47

13 Victory is Krishna's very first *guṇa* ;
accompanies it follows Mādhava-Krishna
wherever he goes ; his second *guṇa*
is humility.

Guvinda-

अनन्ततेजा गोविन्द
शत्रुपूगेषु निर्व्यथः ।
पुरुषः सनातनमयो
यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः ॥

wer.

Where Krishna is,

Hari-
invincible Krishna

s, 'Who among

कथं कृष्ण जयेमेति
येरुक्तं तत्र तैर्जितम् ।
तत् प्रसादाद्धि त्रैलोक्यं
प्राप्तं शक्रादिभिः सुरैः ॥

you leading,

Indra-
Indra-led gods

ou have no reason

f the gods Krishna
ata.

तस्य ते न व्यथां
काञ्चिदिह पश्यामि भारत ।
यस्य ते जयमाशास्ते
विश्वभुक् त्रिदिवेश्वरः ॥

? 2

ater-formation

m with these words,

a:

l the strategy

advised in the śastras.
Enhancer of Kaurava glory, fight fairly
to obtain heaven."

कुरुद्वह!

Guḍākeśa-
looking at soldier-surrounded Arjuna,
said to him :

15 "Whose anger is fiery,
who attacks like a lion
from his army's centre,
who has singly performed
three hundred horse-*yajñas* —
there he is — Bhīṣma.

16 Innumerable soldiers
surround him and guard him,
like clouds the sun.
O hero of heroes!
Destroy them, and challenge
bull-brave Bhīṣma."

SECTION 23

1 Observing the army of Dhṛtarāstra's sons
marching for battle
(continued Saṃjaya), Krishna gave Arjuna
this beneficial advice :

हितार्थाय वचनमब्रवीत्

2 "O maha-muscled hero, the battle
is about to begin.
To defeat your foes, purify yourself —
pray to Durgā."

Vāsudeva-
3 Advised by wise Krishna on the eve
of battle,
Pārtha-Arjuna alighted from his chariot, did *oñjali*
and chanted this stotra:

NOT IN CRITICAL EDITION

4 "*Namaste* !
Lady of the Mandara forest !
Leader of perfected mortals !

शुचिर्भूत्वा महाबाहो संग्रामाभिमुखे स्थितः।
पराजयाय शत्रुणां दुर्गास्तोत्रमुदीरय॥

नमस्ते सिद्धसेनानि ⊙ 51
आर्ये मन्दरवासिनि ।
कुमारि कालि कापालि
कपिले कृष्णपिङ्गले ॥

भद्रकालि नमस्तुभ्यं
महाकालि नमोस्तु ते ।
चण्डि चण्डे नमस्तुभ्यं
तारिणि वरवर्णिनि ॥

कात्यायनि महाभागे
करालि विजये जये ।
शिखिपिच्छध्वजधरे
नानाभरणभूषिते ॥

...ies !
Variedly ornamented lady !

7 Goddess of the fearful spear !
Wielder of sword and shield !
Younger sister of the cowherd chief !
Goddess of the race of Nandagopa !

महिषासृक्प्रिये नित्यं कौशिकि !
अट्टहासे कोकमुखे पीतवासिनि । Kuśika !
नमस्तेऽस्तु रणप्रिये ॥ !
Namaste : wolf-faced one!

Gita Press
तुम्हारा मुख
चक्रवाक के
समान

कोक :
wolf, cuckoo,
cakravāka-goose,
frog,
house-lizard,
a noxious parasitical animal,
name of Viṣṇu.
(Koka-mukha: wolf-faced one)
(MHB)

उमे शाकम्भरि श्वेते कृष्णे कैटभनाशिनि ।
हिरण्याक्षि विरूपाक्षि सुधूम्राक्षि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ ९॥
वेदश्रुति महापुण्ये ब्रह्मण्ये जातवेदसि ।
जम्बू-कटक-चैत्येषु नित्यं सन्निहितालये ॥ १०॥
त्वं ब्रह्मविद्या विद्यानां महानिद्रा च देहिनाम् ।
स्कन्दमातर्भगवति दुर्गे कान्तारवासिनि ॥ ११ ॥
स्वाहाकारः स्वधा चैव कला काष्ठा सरस्वती ।
सावित्रि वेदमाता च तथा वेदान्त उच्यते ॥ १२॥

You are Sruti!
You are the highest virtue Mahā-puṇya!
You bless Brahmins!
You know the Jātaveda fire!
You dwell in the *jambū, kaṭaka* and *caitya* trees!

Of knowledges,
11 you are knowledge of Brahman!
In bodies, you the deep cosmic sleep Mahā-nidrā!
O Durgā!
Auspicious mother of Skanda!
You who dwell in inaccessible regions!

कान्तार
wilderness

12 You who are Svāhā
Svadhā
Kalā
Kāṣṭhā
Sarasvatī
Sāvitrī
Veda Mother
Vedānta!

कला: measure of time:
1) $\frac{1}{1800}$ of a day or 0·8 mins.
2) human body (fat, phlegm, flesh, blood, urine, bile and semen)
3) an atom: 3015 Kalās in all six dhātus, not counting the rasas,
∴ in all 18,090

13 Mahā-devi!
With my purest (innermost) ātman
I sing your praises!
Grant me your grace
To be victorious in battle!
Always, goddess!

स्तुतासि त्वं महादेवि विशुद्धेनान्तरात्मना ।
जयो भवतु मे नित्यं त्वत्प्रसादाद् रणाजिरे ॥13॥
कान्तारभय दुर्गेषु भक्तानां चालयेषु च ।
नित्यं वससि पाताले युद्धे जयसि दानवान् ॥14॥
त्वं जम्भनी मोहिनी च माया ह्रीः आस्तिथैव च ।
संध्या प्रभावती चैव सावित्री जननी तथा ॥15॥
तुष्टिः पुष्टिर्धृतिर्दीप्तिश्चन्द्रादित्यविवर्धिनी ।
भूतिर्भूतिमतां सङ्ख्ये वीक्ष्यसे सिद्धचारणैः ॥16॥

Sleep
Māyā
Modesty
Śrī
Saṃdhyā
Day
Sāvitrī
Mother

16 You are Fulfilment
Prosperity
Radiance
You are the strength
of the Sun and the Moon
You are the radiance
of the Sun and the Moon
Perfected mortals and Cāraṇas
see you in meditation."

17 Impressed by the bhakti of Arjuna
(continued Saṃjaya),
boon-conferring Durgā, in Krishna's presence,
said to Arjuna :

18 "Pāṇḍava !
You will soon defeat your enemies.

20 FEBRUARY 2005 266

Professor P. Lal continues the Bhagavad-Gita by reading the Cosmic Multi-Revelation of the Viṣva-rupa-darshan with which Krishna dazzles Arjuna, followed by bhakti-yoga, and the Body (Kshetra) and the Body-Knower (the Atman), in the 266th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of the Mahabharata of Vyasa at G. D. Birla Sabhagar on 20 February 2005 at 11 a.m.

Of your inexhaustible maha-magnificence.

3 O Parameshvara! O Supreme Lord!
Indeed it is so about your Atman.
But, O Purushottama! O finest of men!
Grant me a revelation of your divine form.

4 Lord! Yogeshvara! If you think me worthy,
Grant me a darshan of your imperishable form.

5 *Sri Bhagavan Krishna said:*
Behold, O Partha-Arjuna:
My divine forms, various-coloured, various-shaped,
Hundreds and thousands of them.

6 O descendent of Bharata!
Behold the Adityas, Vasus, Rudras,
The twin Ashvins and the Maruts.
Behold many marvels never seen before.

7 O Gudakesha-Arjuna! See the entire cosmos,
All moving and unmoving life, centred in my body.
See whatever else you wish to see.

न तु मां शक्यसे
द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः
पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्॥
(11:8)

ita 73

old it.

अद्भुतदर्शनम्
(11: 10)

yes,
...nts,
Wielding many uplifted divine weapons;

11 Divinely garlanded and dressed,
Divinely scented and anointed,
The all-wonderful, universe-faced infinite Divinity.

12 Were a thousand suns to explode
Simultaneously in the sky,
Their brilliance might approximate
The splendour of that Maha-Atman.

gods,
cosmos
d in one.

nd,
ına,
ined his palms in anjali,

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य
भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता।
यदि भाः सदृशी
स्याद्भासस्तस्य
महात्मनः॥
(11:12)

ॐ The Mahābhārata

13 MARCH 2005

Professor P. Lal reads of Yudhisthira's paying puja-respect to Bhisma, Drona, Salya and Kripa on the Kuruksetra battlefield seeking their blessings before he fights them, and Krishna's futile offer to Karna that he defect temporarily to the Pandava side, in the 269th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata at G. D. Birla Sabhagar on 13 March 2005 at 11 a.m.

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या
किमन्यैः शास्त्रसंग्रहैः ।
या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य
मुखपद्माद् विनिःसृता ॥ १॥

ॐ

The Mahābhārata

Session 269
13 March 2005
(Gita Pr. p 2813)

The Bhīṣmavadha Parva in the Bhīṣma Parva

SECTION 43

1 What is the need of studying the śāstras
(continued Vaiśampāyana)?
One needs sing only the *Gitā*, because it came
from Viṣṇu's lotus lips.

2 The *Gitā* is the sum of the śastras,
the sum of the gods,
Gaṅgā the sum of the *tīrthas*, and Manu
the sum of the Vedas.

3 *Gitā*, Gaṅgā, Gāyatrī, Govinda — if anyone
takes to heart
these four "ga"'s, that person is never
born again.

4 Six hundred and twenty ślokas are spoken
by Krishna,
fifty-seven ślokas by Arjuna, sixty-seven ślokas
by Saṃjaya,

Ślokas 1–5 not in Critical Edition

गीता गङ्गा च गायत्री गोविन्देति हृदि स्थिते।
चतुर्गकारसंयुक्ते पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते॥

DHṚṢṬADYUMNA — born from a yajna organised by Drupada to get a son who would kill Drona. Killed by Aśvatthāman because he had decapitated Drona.

The P. Lāl Transcreation

32 In three pieces the Pāñcāla prince's
hard-to-pierce bow.
He fired a terrible arrow resembling
the rod of Kāla —

33 An arrow that pierced the body
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
who nevertheless lifted another bow and shot
fourteen arrows

34 In the direction of Droṇa, wounding him.
Drupada's son
and Droṇa, both tempestuously angry, continued
the duel.

35 Mahārājā, irresistible Śaṅkha attacked the
son of Somadatta,
equally irresistible, shouting, "Stand your ground!
Stand your ground!"

36 Brave Śaṅkha rendered the right arm of
Bhūriśravas useless,
but Somadatta's son was able to wound
Śaṅkha's shoulders.

37 The duel between these on
that battlefield
resembled the ancient clash between
Vāsava-Indra and Vṛtra.

38 O lord of the world! In a fit of rage
the self-confident
mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭaketu
attacked Bāhlika.

39 Rājā, valiant Bāhlika let out a leonine roar
, and shot a shower
of arrows that debilitated the furious
and fierce Dhṛṣṭaketu.

GHATOTKACA, son of Bhīma and rākṣasī Hiḍimbā — He was killed by Karṇa — ALAMBUṢA joined DURYODHANA to avenge the death of his brother BAKA by Bhīma.

40 Like one [illegible] nt attacking another,
the Cedi rājā
Dhṛṣṭaketu, infuriated, wounded Bāhlika with
nine arrows.

41 The two combatants roared and howled
in their anger.
Their wrath made them like the planets Budha
and Aṅgāraka.

नर्दन्तौ पुनः पुनः

Mercury and Mars

42 Cruel-karma-creating Ghaṭotkaca,
then targeted and attacked
the gruesome-karma-creating rākṣasa Alambuṣa,
like Śakra-Indra attacking Bala.

43 Incensed into an incontrollable anger, O Bharata,
Ghaṭotkaca succeeded
in shooting ninety arrows into the body
of mahā-powerful Alambuṣa.

44 But Alambuṣa rallied and was able
to shoot a volley
of hooked and knotted arrows that wounded
mahā-powerful the son of Bhīma.

45 Both Ghaṭotkaca and Alambuṣa looked as
radiantly wounded
as Śakra-Indra and Bala in the war
between gods and antigods.

46 Then, O rājā, powerful Śikhaṇḍin attacked
the son of Droṇa,
Aśvatthāman, who grievously wounded Śikhaṇḍin
with a sharp arrow.

47 Similarly, O rājā, Śikhaṇḍin was able
to wound Aśvatthāman,
the son of Droṇa, with a sharp
and accurate weapon.

राक्षसं रौद्रकर्माणं क्रूरकर्मा घटोत्कचः ।
अलम्बुषं प्रत्युदियाद् बलं शक्र इवाहवे ॥

O rājā!

3 He was deeply upset by his defeat
and by the glory
of Bhīṣma, so he said to the chief
of the Vṛṣnis Krishna:

4 "Krishna, look at the terrible and powerful महेष्वासं भीमपराक्रमं
mahā-archer Bhīṣma —
his arrows consumes my soldiers as flames consume
dry grass in summer.

5 That mahātmā consumes my soldiers as fire
consumes ghee.
How will we ever dare to look him

शक्यो जेतुं यमः क्रुद्धो
वज्रपाणिश्च संयुगे।
वरुणः पाशभृद् चापि
कुबेरो वा गदाधरः॥ ७॥
न तु भीष्मो महातेजाः
शक्यो जेतुं महाबलः।

वनं यास्यामि वार्ष्णेय
श्रेयो मे तत्र जीवितुम् ।९।

यथानलं प्रज्वलितं पतङ्गाः
समभिद्रुताः
विनाशायोपगच्छन्ति
तथा मे सैनिको जनः॥११॥

ned, maha- powerful,
ows, run पुरुषव्याघ्रं
धनुष्मन्तं
t-wielding Indra, महाबलं
ra can be all
powerful Bhīṣma
ıtless on
nan Keśava:
:r, Vārṣneya-Krishna,
c earth-rulers
mahā-
of weapons, he can

11 Like insects rushing to perish in
a fierce fire,
my soldiers rush to perish in
this battle.

O Vārsneya-
12 Krishna, battling for my kingdom,
I perish, slowly.
For my sake, my brave brothers
are arrow-wounded.

शरपीडिताः

13 They suffer for their eldest brother, their
kingdom is lost.
Life is priceless — and now, it seems
so utterly useless.

जीवितं बहु मन्येऽहं
जीवितं ह्यद्य दुर्लभम्

14 I will spend the rest of my life
practising tapasyā.
I will not be responsible, Keśava-Krishna,
for butchering my friends.

न घातयिष्यामि
रणे मित्राणि

15 Mahā-powerful Bhīṣma has killed,
with super-weapons,
thousands of my finest and bravest
chariot-heroes.

16 Tell me, Mādhava-Krishna, what is good for me.
What do I do now?
Savyasācī — It seems to me Arjuna is no more than
an uninvolved spectator.

मध्यस्थमिव

17 Mahā-bodied Bhīṣma alone is full
of Kṣatriya dharma —
he alone seems to be fighting with full
strength and conviction.

महाभुजः

18 With his hero-annihilating mace,
mahā-minded Bhīma is valiant
in combats with soldiers, horses, chariots
and elephants.

27 And proceeded to show his fearful skill
with a large sword which,
O bull-brave rājā, he flourished together
with a bull-hide shield,

कर्म दारुणम्
पुरुषर्षभ

28 A shield decorated with gold stars
and half-moons.
Enraged, the Kaliṅga ruler caressed
his bow-string

नक्षत्रैरर्धचन्द्रैः

29 And fitted a vicious snake-arrow
to his bow,
and fired it straight at Bhīma
with fatal strength.

घोरमेकं
सर्पविषोपमम्

30 Even as the poison-arrow whistled
towards him, O rājā,
Bhīma sliced it in mid-air with
his huge sword,

विपुलासिना

31 And roared such a laughter that all
his enemies trembled.
Futher angered, the ruler of Kaliṅga
decided to pin Bhīma

32 Down with fourteen stone-sharpened tomara-darts,
but mahā-muscled
Pāṇḍava Bhīma disintegrated these
also in mid-air.

चतुर्दशाशिला-
शितान्

33 Having pulverised those fourteen stone-honed
tomara-missiles,
O rājā, Bhīmasena decided to concentrate
his energies elsewhere

34 By launching a direct attack on Bhānumān,
who successfully defended himself
against the bull-brave warrior Bhīma
with an arrow-shower.

जनाद बलवन्नादं नादयानो नभस्तलम्

35 And he roared with sky-shattering
stentorian resonance —
maha- a lion-like shout that grated
on Bhīma's nerves.

सिंहनादं
महाहव
ममृषे भीमः

36 Bhīma countered with an equally
maha- shattering roar,
which spread alarm in the ranks
of the Kaliṅgas.

शब्देन महता
विननाद महास्वनः

37 O Bull-brave Bharata! They were now
convinced Bhīma
was no human being. Still shouting,
maha-muscled Bhīma,

38 Brandishing his sword, ran towards the elephant,
and, O respectworthy monarch,
gripping one tusk, swung himself on
to the elephant's back.

मारिष

39 The Kaliṅga ruler desperately wielded
his *śakti*-lance,
but, with a single stroke, Bhīma sliced
him in two.

40 After killing the Kaliṅga prince,
foe-crushing Bhīma swept
his sword up and struck it
on the elephant's neck.

अरिंदम

41 The severed head of the elephant
hit the ground
with a heavy thud, like the peak
of a water-rotted hill.

सिन्धुवेगेन
सानुमानिव
पर्वतः

42 Sporting his armour, sword in hand,
O Bharata descendant,
Bhīma leapt nimbly off the elephant
onto the ground.

36 As they broke ranks, so greatly
were they afflicted
with Bhīṣma's arrows. Bhīṣma's feat equalled
that of Indra.

37 Mahārāja, so complete was the rout that
two soldiers
could not be seen together; horses, elephants,
humans perished;

38 The Pāṇḍava survivors could only wail
"Hai! Hai!"
in utter despair, father struck son, son
struck father,

39 Friend killed friend, as if propelled
by fate.
Abandoning their armour, many
of Pāṇḍu's sons,

40 Dishevelled and fear-stricken,
the chariot-heroes stood bewildered like
docile cows.

41 Seeing the Pāṇḍava army overwhelmed,
Krishna, delighter
of the Yādavas, took stock of the situation;
he brought

42 The chariot to a dead stop, and
"The time you waited for is now. This
is your chance,

43 Take it, unless you have
A long time ago you said to the
assembly of rājās:

उवाच पार्थं बीभत्सुं निगृह्य रथमुत्तमम् ।
अयं स कालः सम्प्राप्तः पार्थ यस्तेऽभिकाङ्क्षितः ॥

इति तत् कुरु कौन्तेय सत्यं वाक्यं अरिंदम ।
बीभत्सो पश्य सैन्यं स्वं भज्यमानं ततस्ततः ॥

44 'I will kill all the soldiers of
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons,
who are led by Bhīṣma and Droṇa,
on the battlefield.'

45 O Son of Kuntī, punisher of enemies, अरिंदम
be true to your word!
Look, O dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
your army is fleeing!

46 Look, the leaders of Yudhiṣṭhira's army
have panicked
seeing the All-Destroyer Antaka-Bhīṣma
with his all-swallowing mouth.

47 Terrified, they scamper like small creatures
from a lion."
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna listened to Vāsudeva-Krishna,
and replied:

48 "Urge the chariot horses and drive me
to the ocean-army of Bhīṣma.
Today I will humble the revered elder
Kaurava pitāmaha!"

49 O raja! Mādhava-Krishna urged the silver
steeds of the
blinding sun-bright chariot to the spot
where Bhīṣma stood.

50 Seeing the mahā-muscled son of Kuntī
rushing at Bhīṣma,
the mahā-army of Yudhiṣṭhira recovered
its confidence.

51 Finest-of-Kurus Bhīṣma roared repeatedly
like a lion,
and released a shower of arrows on
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's chariot.

प्रहरस्व नरव्याघ्र न चेन्मोहाद् विमुह्यसे ।
यत् त्वया कथितं वीर पुरा राज्ञां समागमे ॥

124 They dropped on the field
like sticks, O rājā,
numbed by the impact
of Arjuna's arrows.
The Aindra missile
killed hundreds of thousands.

125 The arrows of Kirītin-
Arjuna created
a river of blood,
its waters the gushing
wounds of the dying,
thrashing feet its froth.

126 A fear-filled river!
A broad-flowing river!
Carcases of elephants
and horses its banks!
Its mire the marrow
of humans and rākṣasas.

127 Its moss the hair
on decapitated heads;
its sandbanks, bodies;
its waves, floating armour;
its pebbles the bones
of humans and animals.

128 Its banks were infested
with jackals and wolves
and cranes and *tarakṣus* तरक्षु
and hyenas — the maha-river
Vaitaraṇī, cutting
this world from the next!

~~129~~ 130 The Cedis, Pāñcālas,
Karūṣas and Matsyas,
observing the slaughter,

victoriously cheered
with war-cries that frightened
the rest of the Kauravas.

~~130~~ 129 The victory chants celebrated
the rout of the Kauravas
by Phālguna-Arjuna,
much as a lion
terrifies creatures
by the strength of his prowess.

131 Like a lion terrorising deer
did Kirīṭin - Arjuna
humble his enemies.

Stricken with fear,
the enemy generals
saw their armies destroyed.

133 Duryodhana-led Kauravas,
including Bāhlīka,
and Droṇa and Bhīṣma,
all yuga-end victims
of the Mahendra-weapon's
proliferating horrors.

युगान्तकल्पम्
ऐन्द्रमस्त्रं घोरम्

134 And so, achieving
renown, and observing
the wan sun and saṁdhyā,
Dhanañjaya!?

132 Janardana - Krishna
and the Gandiva-wielder
Arjuna were exultant.
Then they saw the sun
inpulling his rays —
the grievously wounded

sted.

amp.

तुमुल कुरुणां
निशमुखे घोरतमः
प्रणादः

24 O bull-brave Bharata! The son of Śala,
from his horseless chariot,
stared helplessly at the mahā-ātmaned
Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

25 Then that bull-brave hero, Śala's son,
lifted ~~a maha-fearful~~
~~pure-steel sword~~ and strode towards
~~Dhṛṣṭadyumna's chariot.~~

26 He came like a mahā-uraga-serpent
falling from the sky.
He came like a huge wave
overrunning the beach.
He came like the doom of Kāla
in the world of man.

27 He charged upon them,
and he shone like the sun.
Astounded, the Pāṇḍavas ~~and Dhṛṣṭadyumna~~
saw him charge like a musth elephant.

28 He came with his glittering sword,
in his dazzling armour.
The prince of Pāñcāla, Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
saw him descend

29 And, roused to anger, the general waited
till he neared the chariot,
beyond arrow-range. Then, lifting his mace,
he smashed his enemy's head.

सेनापति:
क्रुद्धो विभेद
गदया शिर:

30 O rājā! He fell down dead.
His shining sword and shield
slipped and fell.
His body fell, and they fell.

31 The powerful mahātmā ~~prince~~ rājā of Pañcāla
added lustre

हतस्य पततो हस्ताद् वेगेन न्यपतद् भुवि

तास्मिन् हते महेष्वासो राजपुत्रे महारथे।
हाहाकारो महानासीत् तव सैन्यस्य मारिष॥

to his renown by killing his foe with one
blow of his mace.

32 O respectworthy monarch! The soldiers saw
the mahā-bowman mahā-chariot-hero prince,
Śala's son, killed, they raised a mahā-uproar,
screaming, "Hai! Hai!"

33 Witnessing his son killed, Samyamani-Śala,
bursting with anger,
launched a fierce attack on the battle-hardened
Pāñcāla Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

34 All the rājās of the contending armies
of Kauravas
and Pāndavas saw the two war-scarred heroes
locked in combat.

युद्धदुर्मदौ

35 Destroyer-of-foes Śala, wildly enraged,
shot three heroic arrows
at Dhṛṣṭadyunina, like a mahout hook-goading
a maha elephant.

Pārṣata

36 And Śalya, the glory of assemblies, also
wounded Dhṛṣṭadyumna
on the chest. With that, another horrendous
clash took place.

समितिशोभन:

SECTION 62

1 "Fate is stronger than human effort, Samjaya,"
said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"or why is it my sons are always losing
to the Pāṇḍavas?

2 To believe you is to believe that
my soldiers

दैवमेव परं मन्ये पौरुषादपि संजय।
यत् सैन्यं मम पुत्रस्य पाण्डुसैन्येन बाध्यते॥

you can still please your relatives and others,
O rājā.

38 I kept insisting — but you never
cared to listen.
Now you suffer for the wrongs you did
the Pāṇḍavas.

39 O mahā-muscled ruler, prabhu-lord,
learn why the never
ill-doing Pāṇḍavas will never come
to any harm.

अक्लिष्टकर्मणाम्

40 There was not, is not, and there will
not be any
person to defeat the Pāṇḍavas, protected
by Krishna, the Śārnga-bow wielder,
whom neither gods, anti-gods, nor men can
fully know.

Hari-

41 You who know dharma, tāta, dear one,
let me tell you what
the serene-ātmaned munis say about
this purāṇa-gītā.

42 In the ancient past, the gods and
ṛṣis assembled
on Gandhamādana mountain to revere
Brahmā Pitāmaha.

43 Sitting in the centre, lord-of-creatures
Prajāpati-Brahmā noticed
a chariot as if aflame suspended
in space.

हृष्टात्मा

44 Obtaining insight through meditation, Brahmā,
with ecstatic ātman,
did *añjali* and *namaskāra* to Puruṣa Parameśvara,
the Supreme Divinity.

नास्ति लोकेषु तद् भूतं भविता भविष्यति /
यो जयेत् पाण्डवान् सर्वान् पालिताञ्छार्ङ्गधन्वना /
ससुरासुरमर्त्येषु यो विद्यात् तत्त्वतो हरिम् ॥

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VI : 65/ 45 - 49] 15

45 The gods and ṛṣis also saw the maha-marvellous vision
and, standing with Brahmā, offered their *añjali*.

महदद्भुतम्

46 Knower-of-prime-dharma, best-of-Veda-knowers, creator-of-the-worlds Brahmā chanted this praise of the vision :

अर्च्य

47 'Glory of the universe !

विश्वावसुर्विश्वमूर्तिर्विश्वेशो
विष्वक्सेनो विश्वकर्मा वशी च ।
विश्वेश्वरो वासुदेवोऽसि तस्माद्
योगात्मानं दैवतं त्वामुपैसि ॥४७॥

…se !

…vinity !

जय विश्व महादेव जय लोकहिते रत ।
जय योगीश्वर विभो जय योगपरावर ॥४८॥

…ga !

पद्मगर्भ विशालाक्ष जय लोकेश्वरेश्वर ।
भूतभव्यभवन्नाथ जय सौम्यात्मजात्मज ॥४९॥

…universe,

…re,

ये च कृष्णं प्रपद्यन्ते
तेन मुह्यन्ति मानवाः।
भये महति मग्नांश्च
पाति नित्यं जनार्दनः॥

The P. Lāl Transcreation

ing abode

id prospeity

ia

of Janārdana

rājā,

tman
nahātmā

स तं युधिष्ठिरो ज्ञात्वा
याथातथ्येन भारत।
सर्वात्मना महात्मानं
केशवं जगदीश्वरम्।
प्रपन्नः शरणं राजन्
योगानां प्रभुमीश्वरम्॥

vorlds
God."

68

1 "Mahārāja,
Listen to my song of praise," said Bhīṣma,
"Sung by Brahmā himself in the past
And repeated before humans
By gods and Brahmā-ṛṣis.

ब्रह्मभूतं स्तवं मम
यः पुरा कथितो भुवि

2 'Lord of the gods and Sādhyas,
God above all other gods,
Knower of the innermost heart,
Protector of people —
So Nārada ~~sings~~ chants your praises.

देवदेवेश्वर

3 You are the past, present, and future,
Sings Mārkaṇḍeya,
You are the Yajña of all yajñas,
The Tapasyā above all tapasyās.

4 You are the God above all gods,
Sings Bhṛgu,
You are the Ancient and Shining Viṣṇu,

पुराणं चैव परमं विष्णो रूपं तवेति च

5 You are the Vāsudeva of the Vasus.
Sings island-born Vyāsa, Dvaipāyana
The strength behind Indra,
The God of gods.

6 You were the lord of creation Dakṣa
In the distant past
When creation commenced;
You are the creator of all,
Sings Aṅgiras.

7 You are the Form Unmanifested,
You are the Concept Manifested,
Sing Devala and Asita;
You are the Creator of the gods.

8 Your head
covers sky and space
Your arms
sustain the earth
Your stomach
holds the three worlds
You are the Eternal Puruṣa personified.

पुरुषोऽसि सनातनः

9 Purified by tapasyā,
People know you as such.
To the ṛṣis who have darshan of the ātman,
You are the only Reality.

आत्मदर्शनतृप्तानामृषीणां चासि सत्तमः

मध्यंदिनगते सूर्ये नभस्याकुलतां गते

26 [VI : 72 / 12 - 18] The P. Lāl Transcreation

12 It was high noon, and the sun
beat down
with fierce heat when the Kaurava-Pāṇḍava
butchery commenced.

13 It was enchantment to see the beautiful
pennant-flying
chariots, gold-carved, tiger-skin covered, rushing
through the field.

ध्वजिनो हेमचित्राङ्गा विचरन्तो

14 And the noise! The tumult!
The screams of bloodthirsty warriors
Bent on slaughter!
Their lion-like roars!

सिंहानामिव नर्दताम्

15 We could clearly see the vicious parrying
and lunging
between the Sṛñjayas and Kauravas in that
unbelievable clash.

O rājā!
16 Then, suddenly, the sun and the points
of the horizon
were blotted by a cloud-thick volley
of arrows.

17 And śakti-missiles with glistening heads
flashed
And keenly tempered swords
flashed
tomara
And hurled lances
flashed
Like blue lotuses
in the sunlight

नीलोत्पलनिभाः प्रभाः

18 And polished armour
flashed
Bracelets and other ornaments
flashed

कवचानां विचित्राणां भूषाणां प्रभास्तथाः।
खं दिशः प्रदिशश्चैव भासयामासुरोजसा॥

Dazzling the sky
and the points of the horizon.

19 O rājan, the ornamented corpses
of Indra-like kings
lay scattered on the field like radiant suns
and moons.

नरेन्द्र
विराज

20 O rājā! Chariot-heroes, tigers among men,
careened on the field — as colourful as planets
in space.

विराज समरे
ग्रहा इव नमस्तले

21 The mahā-powerful super-excelling chariot-
hero Bhīṣma
angrily clashed with Bhīma in the presence
of all the troops.

रथिनां
श्रेष्ठो

22 Bhīṣma fired stone-whetted, golden-winged,
oil-smoothed and
energetically-strung arrows at Bhīma, wounding
him seriously.

रुक्मपुङ्खा
शिलाशिता

23 O Bharata! Bhīma was able also to hurl
his mahā-swift *śakti*-missile which hissed sowards Bhīṣma
like a fierce snake.

24 Bhīṣma fired straight arrows at the
gold-bodied *śakti*
whistling towards him, and pulverised
it midway.

25 With a broad-tipped bhalla-arrow, superbly
whetted and
polished, Bhīṣma severed Bhīṣma's bow in two,
O Bharata.

10 JULY 2005

Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of the sixth day's battle, in which the Kauravas, led by Drona and Kripa, fight pitched clashes with Bhima, who prefers to target and rout Duryodhana, in the 285th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata at G. D. Birla Sabhagar on 10 July 2005 at 11 a.m.

3 It is your own fault that has led
to this war with the Pāndavas.
today You are merely reaping the fruits of
your own misdeeds.

स्वमवाद्य फलं
मुण्डं कृत्वा
किल्बिषमात्मना:

4 You do the karma, you taste the fruit,
O rājā;
in this life, and later — you reap exactly
what you sow.

5 But be calm, be patient, O rājā, ~~your majesty,~~
mahā- though calamity has struck.
O lord of men! Listen to my account of
the day's battle.

स्थिरो भूत्वा

नराधिप

6 Slicing through the ranks of your mahā-army
with sharp arrows,
valiant Bhima launched an attack ~~on~~
Duryodhana's brothers.

7 Duḥśāsana, Durviṣaha, Duḥsaha, Durmada, Jaya,
Jayatsena, Vikarṇa, Citrasena, Sudarśana,

8 Cārucitra, Suvarman, Duṣkarṇa and Karṇa —
These and many other mahā-chariot-heroes,

आत्मनैव कृतं कर्म आत्मनैवोपभुज्यते ।
इह च प्रेत्य वा राजंस्त्वया प्राप्तं यथातथम् ॥

प्रजासंहारणे सूर्यः क्रूरैरिव महाग्रहैः ।

9 Who were near Bhīṣma, and your infuriated
mahā-chariot-hero sons,
were tricked by Bhīma who succeeded
in penetrating their ranks.

10 Those lords of men spotted him in their midst
and resolved:
"Now is the time to trap him and make
short work of him."

11 Kuntī's son Bhīma, ringed by cousin-brothers
all resolved to kill him,
looked like the sun ringed by malignant mahā-planets
at the dissolution of the universe.

12 Though right in the centre of the Kauravas,
he did not fear,
as Mahendra did not fear in the centre
of the Dānava antigods.

13 Prabhu! Lord! Hundreds and thousands of chariot-heroes rained missiles
on that sole hero who stood for battle
in their midst.

14 Valiant Bhīma ignored the assault of
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons,
and killed chariot-heroes, elephant-riders,
cavalry and others.

15 Realising that his cousin brothers were intent on
capturing him,
mahā-minded Bhīma decided, O rājā,
to kill them first.

16 Jumping from his chariot, Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma, mace uplifted,

5 Confounding our plans,
and gathering fame.
I am wounded all over
by the death-mace of Bhīma
whose thunderbolt shattered
our *makara*-strategy.

मृत्युदण्ड

क्रुद्धं तमुद्वीक्ष्य भयेन राजन्
सम्मूर्छितो न लभे शान्तिमद्य।
इच्छे प्रसादात् तव सत्यसंध
प्राप्तुं जयं पाण्डवेयांश्च हन्तुम्॥

āja,
mind:
āṇḍavas."

मनस्वी गाङ्गसुत
शस्त्रभृतां

son of Gaṅgā,
smilingly said :

8 "For your victory and joy,
I shall make all efforts
to scatter the ranks
of the formidable Pāṇḍavas.
I shall not conceal
myself in your need. → न चात्मनं छादयेऽहं त्वदर्थे

9 The mahā-chariot-heroes
on the side of the Pāṇḍavas
are countless and famous,
untiring, accomplished
in weapons, and spewing
forth venom in battle. रोषजविषं वमन्ति

10 It is far from easy
to rout them in battle.
They hate you, O rājā.

वैरास्त्वया

they are proud of their prowess.
But fight them I will,
with all my ātman. सर्वात्मना।

11 I will offer my life
in the cause of your victory —
I promise you this.
For your sake I will battle
the gods and the Daityas,
let alone your enemies.

12 I will challenge the Pāṇḍavas
and in doing so achieve
the success of your hopes."
This assurance of Bhīṣma
revived Duryodhana;
his spirts rejoiced.

13 With a heart full of joy
he ordered the kings
and soldiers — "Advance!"
The army of chariots
and elephants and horses
and soldiers obeyed.

14 What an army, O rājā!
What extensive equipment!
What a show of confidence!
What elephants and horses
and soldiers, O rājā —
a beautiful sight!

15 The elephant division
with expert mahouts
appeared from all sides;
the soldiers were led
by experts in offensive
and defensive weapons.

MAHABHARATA VOL 122 JANUARY 1979

ॐ The Mahābhārata

IN THIS FASCICULE

On the seventh day of battle, various duels take place between Śrutāyus and Yudhiṣṭhira ; Bhūriśravas, Cekitāna, Dhṛṣṭaketu, Citrasena, and Abhimanyu *[Section 84]* ; Bhīma and Śikhaṇḍin, and others *[85]* ; Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira, and others *[86]*.

31 JULY 2005

Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of the 7th day's battle on Kuruksetra involving combats between Yudhisthira-Srutayus, Cekitan-Kripa, Dhristaketu-Bhurisravas, Abhimanyu and three sons of Dhritarastra, Arjuna-Bhisma, Bhima-Citrasena, and Yudhisthira reminding Sikhandin of his vow to kill Bhisma, in the 288th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata, presented by Sanskriti Sagar at G.D. Birla Sabhagar on 31 July 2005 at 11 a.m.

MAHABHARATA VOL 122 JANUARY 1979

The Mahābhārata

The Bhīṣma-vadha-parva in the Bhīṣma Parva

SECTION 84

1 The sun was at its height (said Saṁjaya)
when Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
saw Śrutāyus and sped towards him
to do battle.

2 He rushed at foe-crushing Śrutāyus
and wounded
him with nine knotted arrows of
brilliant sharpness.

3 Śrutāyus withstood
with a counter-volley of seven arrows
at Yudhiṣṭhira.

4 They cut through Yudhiṣṭhira's armour and
sucked his blood
as if draining the very spirit out of

41 Your father, strict-vowed Bhīṣma (said Saṃjaya), heard
those cruel words with tears in his eyes
and said :

42 "Child, didn't I, and Droṇa, and Vidura,
and noble Gāndhārī
warn you about this earlier ? But you
would not listen.

43 Did I not ask you, foe-crushing Duryodhana,
not to involve
me and ācārya Droṇa in any way
in this war ?

44 This I can tell you in all truth :
whichever son
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra fights Bhīma, will die
at his hands.

45 Therefore, rājā, steady your mind. Resolve
firmly to fight
the sons of Pāṇḍu, always keeping heaven
as your goal.

46 Even the gods led by Indra cannot
defeat the Pāṇḍavas.
Fight if you must. First, steady your mind.
Then fight."

SECTION 89

1 "Tell me, Saṃjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"what did Bhīṣma,
Karṇa and Droṇa do seeing my sons
die one by one ?

2 Every day, Samjaya, my sons are being
wiped out.
Such is my fate. I am a victim
of misfortune.

3 They never seem to win, they always
are losing.
Bhisma and Droṇa and the
mahātmā Kṛpa,

4 Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas, and Bhagadatta,
Aśvatthāman, and hosts of other brave warriors

5 Protect them, but still my sons are dying
on the field.
Tell me, Samjaya, what else can it be but
the work of fate ?

6 Duryodhana has always spurned
my advice.
Repeatedly warned by me, by Bhisma
and Vidura,

7 By his mother Gāndhārī
has the ignored us. Let him taste the fruits
of his folly,

8 And watch his brothers, one by one,
day by day,
despatched by infuriated Bhīma
Yama's abode."

9 (replied Samjaya), Vidura's words
have come true.
They were spoken for your good, but you
would not listen.

SECTION 95

Foe-crushing
1 Rājā Duryodhana
refused to believe
a rākṣasa had routed his soldiers
in battle.
He approached Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma,
and respectfully विनयेन

2 Reported all that had taken place —
the victory
of Ghaṭotkaca, and his own humiliation
(continued Sañjaya).

3 The hard-to-defeat hero sighed repeatedly
as he reported the details,
O rājā, and said to the Kaurava
Pitāmaha Bhīṣma :

4 "Vasudeva's son Krishna is the strength of the Pāṇḍavas.
Prabhu! Lord!
so are you ours — or why would I have begun
this fearful war ?

5 I have eleven *akṣauhiṇīs* of soldiers
under my command,
and they and I are all yours to command,
O foe-crusher. परन्तप

6 And yet, O tiger-brave Bhārata, भरतशार्दूल
I am defeated
by the Pāṇḍavas, led by Bhīma
and Ghaṭotkaca !

7 This flames through me like fire consuming
a withered tree.
O mahā-fortune-favoured foe-slayer,
I seek your grace.

शुष्कवृक्षमिवानल
यदिच्छामि महाभाग त्वत्प्रसादात् परंतप

राक्षसापसदं हन्तुं स्वयमेव पितामह।
त्वां समाश्रित्य दुर्धर्षं तन्मे कर्तुं त्वमर्हसि॥

8 Pitāmaha! Grant that I annihilate
that atrocious rākṣasa today —
with your help. Grant that this wish
is fulfilled."

9 O unexcelled Bharata! Hearing this request of the rājā, — भरतसत्तम
Śāntanu's son
Bhīṣma said to Duryodhana these
words :

10 "O foe-chastiser, O rājā, O Kaurava, — परंतप
listen to my advice
about how the strategy has to be
worked out, mahārāja.

11 Tāta! My child! O foe-destroyer! — अरिंदम
O defectless one! — अनघ
Your safety is paramount. You should fight only
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira, — आत्म रक्ष्यो

12 Or Arjuna, or Bhīma, or even the twins — सर्वावस्था
Nakula and
Sahadeva. A rājā's dharma is to
oppose rājās.

राजधर्मं पुरस्कृत्य राजा राजानमार्च्छति

13 You must not stoop to fight Haiḍamba Ghaṭotkaca.
I, Droṇa, Kṛpa, Aśvatthāman, Kṛtavarman,
Śalya, Bhūriśravas, the mahā-chariot-hero Vikarṇa,

14 Duḥśāsana and your other excellent brothers —
We will fight the mahā-powerful rākṣasa on your behalf.

15 Or, since you are so bitterly opposed to that Indra-among-rākṣasas Ghaṭotkaca,
Allow this warrior to battle that ill-minded enemy —

16 The earth-lord Bhagadatta, who is the equal of Purandara Indra in war."
Saying this to the rājā, to Bhagadatta

भगदत्तो महीपालः पुरन्दरसमो युधि

घटमानं यथाशक्ति कुर्वाणं च तव प्रियम् ।
जुह्वानं समरे प्राणांस्तव वै प्रियकाम्यया ॥

then, after some time, with anger
and sorrow,
O Bharata,
3 He lifted his eyes as if he could
consume gods,
gandharvas, and anti-gods ; then, लोके लोकविदां वरः
wisest of the wise Bhīṣma

4 In a calm voice said to Duryodhana,
your son :
"Why do you say these ~~bitter~~ dagger-like words,
Duryodhana ?

5 Why to me, who have always struggled
for your welfare,
and am ready to lay down my life
for your good ?

6 Don't you have sufficient proof → पर्याप्तं तन्निदर्शनम्
of Pāṇḍava Arjuna's invincibility
in the fact that he defeated Śakra-Indra
and gratified Agni in Khāṇḍava ?

7 Wasn't it sufficient proof, O mahā-muscled hero,
that Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
freed you after you were captured
by the gandharvas ?

8 For at that time all your brave brothers fled,
did they not, prabhu-lord,
and among them was Rādheya-Karṇa,
the son of a Sūta.

9 Don't you recall the occasion when,
in the kingdom
of Virāṭa, Arjuna singlehanded dared
to attack us all ?

द्रवमाणेषु शूरेषु सोदरेषु तव प्रभो ।
सूतपुत्रे च राधेये पर्याप्तं तन्निदर्शनम् ॥

10 Isn't it proof enough that, after
defeating Drona
and me in battle, he stripped us
of our dresses ?

11 Isn't it proof enough that he routed
the mahā-bowmen
Aśvatthāman and Kṛpa when they were rustling
Virāṭa's cattle ?

12 Isn't it proof enough that he humbled
always arrogant Karṇa
by snatching his robes and giving them
to Uttara ?

सदा पुरुषमानिनम्

13 Isn't it proof enough of Pārtha-Arjuna's strength
that he routed
the Nivātakavacas whom even Vāsava-Indra
could not defeat ?

14 Which man has power to harm Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
who is protected
by the world-protecting wielder of chakra,
mace and conch ?

यस्य गोप्ता जगद्गोप्ता शङ्खचक्रगदाधरः

15 Of infinite śakti is Vāsudeva-Krishna
Sole Creator and Destroyer

वासुदेवोऽनन्तशक्तिः
सृष्टिसंहारकारकः ।
सर्वेश्वरो देवदेवः
परमात्मा सनातनः ॥

and the mahā-ṛsis,
...dhana-Duryodhana,
...now what to do.
...d.
...mistakes

त्वं तु मोहान्न जानीषे

arrows its whirlpools
horses its fish

35 Soldiers' heads its stones
elephants its sharks
head-gear its froth
bows its currents
swords its tortoises

36 Trees on the banks its flags
warriors its banks
suffering erosion
hamsa-s flesh-eaters its swans —
All adding to the population
of Yama's kingdom.

मर्त्यकूलापहारिणी
यमराष्ट्रविवर्धनी

37 And Kṣatriya heroes O rājā
crossed this river
on their rafts of chariots
and horses and elephants
with fearless energy.

38 Like the river Vaitaraṇī
that carries the spirits
of the dead to the realm
of the rājā of spirits
so this river at noon
transported the cowards
away in a swoon. . .

प्रेतराजपुरम्

39 The Kṣatriya heroes witnessed the
incredible bloodshed
and said : "Duryodhana's crime is destroying
the Kṣatriyas.

दुर्योधनापराधेन
गच्छन्ति क्षत्रियाः
क्षयम्

40 Why did lord-of-men Dhṛtarāṣṭra
envy the glory

guna-laden

of the virtuous Pāṇḍavas ? He was swayed by greed."

पापात्मा लोभमोहित:

41 All over the field such statements, could be heard
praising the Pāṇḍavas and condemning your sons.

42 Hearing these sentiments voiced by the warring soldiers,
your son Duryodhana, harmer of the world's people,

आगस्कृत सर्वलोकस्य

O Bharata,

43 Said to Bhiṣma, Droṇa, Kṛpa and Śalya :
"Fight ! Fight selflessly! Do not delay." ...

O rājā!

44 Then erupted the battle between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
whose origin was the dice-game, whose end was total doom.

युध्यध्वम् अनहंकारा: किं चिरं कुरुथेति

45 Son of Vicitravirya, see now the fruit of your refusal
to accept the advice of your many mahātmā heroes.

46 Neither the Paṇḍavas nor the Kauravas have the least
concern for their lives in this hideous battle,

एतस्मात् कारणाद्
घोरो वर्तते स्वजनक्षय: |
दैवाद् वा पुरुषव्याघ्र
तव चापनयान् नृप ||

* ...truck

...olicy, as you will,

*

...a Parva
...nd here.

60 Flinging aside the reins of Arjuna's white-
horsed-chariot,
Krishna leapt out of the splendid vehicle,
O gracious monarch,

61 And shouting war-cries like a lion,
radiant and
swift and strong, whip in hand,
he charged towards Bhīṣma.

62 World-lord, Jagadīśvara-Krishna,
eyes copper-red
in anger, ran at Bhīṣma, and the
earth trembled.

63 And your soldiers stood petrified with
terrible fear
when they saw Krishna about to pounce
upon Bhīṣma.

64 Suddenly there were shouts all over the field :
"Bhīṣma is finished !
Bhīṣma is finished !" — your soldiers, mahārāja,
terrified by Vāsudeva-Krishna.

65 Blue-skinned Krishna, in saffron silk,
charging at Bhīṣma,
lapis lazuli-complexioned Janārdana,
punisher of people,
looked as beautiful as a rain-cloud flashing
with lightning.

66 Like a lion attacking an elephant, like
a leader-bull
attacking a bull, the bull-brave Yādava
attacked Bhīṣma.

हतो भीष्मो
हतो भीष्मस्तत्र
तत्र महाहवे

स सिंह इव मातङ्गं यूथर्षभ इवर्षभम् ।
अभिदुद्राव वेगेन विनदन् यादवर्षभः ।

पुण्डरीकाक्ष

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VI : 106 / 67 - 74] j9

67 Seeing lotus-eyed Krishna advancing,
nor was Bhīṣma mahā-
dismayed. He stood firm, stretching his bow
fully taut.

Govinda-
68 Unperturbed he spoke to Krishna :
" Lotus-eyed one ! Puṇḍarīkākṣa, come! *
maskāra !

उवाच चैव गोविन्दम्
असम्भ्रान्तेन चेतसा ।
एह्येहि पुण्डरीकाक्ष
देवदेव नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

...assacse,
...ātvatas! #
...y you,
...ṇa,
...good
...ır me for it,
...Govinda-Krishna.

...rishna. दासोऽस्मि
...juna तव

मामद्य सात्वतश्रेष्ठ
पातयस्व महाहवे ।
त्वया हि देव संग्रामे
हतस्यापि समानघ ॥

...ace, Pārtha-

...a, continued
pushing ahead,
Pārtha- dragging Arjuna with him. Brave, foe-
crushing Arjuna

Hṛṣīkeśa-
74 Then held on to Krishna's legs, and
stopped him

यैव हि त्वं कृता धात्रा सैव हि त्वं शिखण्डिनी

[VI : 108 | 41 - 47] The P. Lāl Transcreation

Śikhandin's chariot-heroes like fire sweeping
through a forest.

41 Śikhandin fired three arrows straight
at the chest
of Bhīṣma, who looked like fierce Kāla Antaka-
or a virulent snake.

42 Wounded by Śikhandin, Bhīṣma glared संक्रुद्धः
at him angrily
and at the same time condescendingly, प्रहसन्
smilingly and said :

43 "You can carry on hitting me. I will
not retaliate.
To me you remain the same Śikhandinī
the Creator made."

44 These words of Bhīṣma sent anger rushing
into Śikhandin
and, licking the corners of his mouth,
he replied :

45 "Mahā-muscled hero, I know you, you ruin जानामि
of the Kṣatriyas ! त्वां महाबाहो
I have heard of your duel क्षत्रियाणां क्षयंकर
with Jāmadagni-Paraśurāma.

46 I have heard a lot
about your god-like prowess.
In spite of that I choose to fight
you today.
Narottama! Finest-of-men!

47 I will today do something
to please the Pāṇḍavas and myself.
Puruṣa-sattama! O most marvellous man!
I challenge you! Fight with me today!

दिव्यश्च ते प्रभावोऽयं मया च बहुशः श्रुतः।
जानन्नपि प्रभावं ते योत्स्येऽद्याहं त्वया सह॥

48 I vow before you today that I shall
kill you !
Now that you know,
do whatever you like.

49 Always-victorious Bhīṣma ! Fight me,
or don't fight me —
you die today. Take a long last look
at the world."

सुहृद्दृष्टः क्रियतां लोकोऽयं

50 Śikhaṇḍin shot five knotted arrows
at Bhīṣma
who was still smarting under his
wordy arrows. → वाक्यसायकैः

51 Mahā-chariot-hero Savyasācī-Arjuna heard the vow of Śikhaṇḍin
and urged
his chariot forward, and shouted
to Śikhaṇḍin :

52 "Forge ahead and attack fearful Bhīṣma,
I shall cover you
and prevent their warriors from reaching
your chariot. Add ⊛

53 O mahā-muscled one! There is no way-ing Bhīṣma,
mahā-powerful Bhīṣma can harm you → मारिष
and me, mockery → अवहास्य ! लोकस्य
Attack him now!
Now is the time! ⊛

ill

...ful one,

to protect you
from the chariot-heroes of the Kauravas.
But kill Bhīṣma.

नष्टप्रभ इवादित्य: सर्वतो लोहिता दिश: ।
रसते व्यथते भूमि: कम्पतीव च सर्वश: ॥

24 [VI : 112 | 7 - 14] The P. Lāl Transcreation

7 The sun has lost its dazzle,
the points of the horizon are blood-red,
the earth trembles
and whines.

8 *Kaṅka*-birds, vultures ~~and~~ cranes [balāka-]
screech needlessly,
jackals howl inauspiciously,
foreboding [mahā-] disaster.

घोरा वेदयन्तो महद् भयम् ।

9 Giant meteors
swirl out of the sun-maṇḍala,
the Parigha constellation
surrounds the sun

पपात महती चोल्का श्येनादित्यमण्डलात्
घोरचन्द्रभास्कर

देवतायतस्थाश्च कौरवेन्द्रस्य देवता: ।
कम्पन्ते च हसन्ते च नृत्यन्ति च रुदन्ति च ॥

god-abode
king Dhṛtarāstra

keeping the sun inauspiciously to their left,
and the [bhagavān] moon rises topsy-turvy,
horns pointing downwards.

अवाक्शिरा:

13 The bodies of the kings in Dhṛtarāṣṭra's army
have lost their lustre ;
the armour of these Indra-among-men kings
does not even shine.

14 I hear the [mahā-] din of the warring armies,
the blare of the Pāñcajanya conch
and the twang of the Gāṇḍiva bow.

हृष्यन्ति रोमकूपाणि सीदतीव च मे मनः ।
चिन्तयित्वा महाबाहो भीष्मार्जुनसमागमम् ॥

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Bībhatsu-

15 Arjuna will ignore the other warriors
and seek out Bhīṣma —
for he possesses the most remarkable weapons.

O mahā-powerful one!

16 The pores of my body horripilate,
my mind is paralysed with anxiety,
I keep thinking of the impending duel
between Arjuna and Bhīṣma.

17 Placing the malice-motivated Śikhaṇḍin in front of him,
Pārtha- Arjuna advances to kill Bhīṣma,
Using that crooked Pāñcāla prince as his shield.

18 Bhīṣma's vow was :
I will not kill Śikhaṇḍin. नाहं हन्यां शिखण्डिनं
The Creator made him female, स्त्री ह्येषा विहिता धात्रा
by chance he turned male. दैवाच्च स पुमान्

19 Drupada's mahā-powerful son Śikhaṇḍin
sports an inauspicious sign in his flag. अमङ्गलध्वज
Bhīṣma will never strike him.

20 My mind is filled with anxiety
when I see Pārtha- Arjuna charging angrily
at the aged Kaurava patriarch.

21 Yudhiṣṭhira's wrath,
the clash between Arjuna and Bhīṣma,
my use of varied weapons in battle —
these bode ill for all.

22 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna is
intelligent
strong
valiant
expert in weapons
nimble
He shoots arrows straight from far
He knows what is auspicious and inauspicious.

मनस्वी बलवाञ्शूरः कृतास्त्रो लघुविक्रमः ।
दूरपाती दृढेषुश्च निमित्तज्ञश्च पाण्डवः ।

O rājā!
8 foe-crushing Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma, who knew how

युधिष्ठिर महाप्राज्ञ
सर्वशास्त्रविशारद।
शृणुष्व वचनं तात
धर्म्यं स्वर्ग्यं च जल्पतः॥
निर्विण्णोऽस्मि भृशं तात
देहेनानेन भारत।
घ्नतश्च मे गतः कालः
सुबहून् प्राणिनो रणे॥
तस्मात् पार्थं पुरोधाय
पाञ्चालान् सृञ्जयांस्तथा।
मद्वधे क्रियतां मम
चेदिच्छसि प्रियम्॥

hundreds

he field, O earth-lord,

prowess अज्ञातकल्पानि नामगोत्राणि।

en days,

निरविद्यत जीवितेन

nd his life न हन्यां

man beings मानवश्रेष्ठान्

rāja, संग्रामे

vowed pitā, सुबहूनि इति

who was

ā, my child,

.

will lead to heaven.

...ild.

O Bharata descendant! I have passed my time
killing too many men on the field of battle.

15 If you wish me well,
kill me.
Position the Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas with Arjuna in front of you,
and kill me."

16 Convinced that this was Bhīṣma's desire,
truth-inceeing rājā Yudhiṣṭhira stationed the Sṛñjayas in front
and attacked Bhīṣma.
सत्यदर्शन

17 Acting on the suggestion of Bhīṣma, O rājā,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira
commanded their forces :

18 "Advance ! अभिद्रवध्वं युध्यध्वं भीष्मं जयत संयुगे।
Fight !
Defeat Bhīṣma ! रक्षिता सत्यसंधेन जिष्णुना
You will be covered by Jiṣṇu Arjuna,
the invincible, never-failing hero. रिपुजिष्णुना।

19 Our general, valiant mahā-bowman Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
...u support.

मा वो भीष्माद् भयं (*)
किञ्चिदस्त्वद्य युधि सृञ्जयाः।
ध्रुवं भीष्मं विजेष्यामः
पुरस्कृत्य शिखण्डिनम् ॥

...rd your fear of Bhīṣma ! (*)
...nt —

...adopted this plan,
...e realm of Brahmā

...ttacked Bhīṣma,
... ...handin and Dhanañjaya Arjuna
were at the army's head.

23 Ordered by your son Duryodhana, the mahā-powerful rulers
of different lands नानाजनपदेश्वराः
marched to battle, accompanied by Droṇa
and his son Aśvatthāman.

24 Your brilliantly accomplished son Duḥśāsana,
with the assistance
of his brothers, formed a protective ring
round Bhīṣma.

भीष्मं समरमध्यस्थं पालयान् चक्रिरे

55 Elephants and chariot-heroes
        toppled
Chariots lay on the field
        wheels smashed
        yokes splintered
        flags shredded

56 The battlefield
        bloodied
        with gore of elephants
        and horses
        and chariot-heroes
was as beautiful
        as an autumn sky
        flecked with red
        sunset clouds

छन्नमायोधनं रेजे
रक्ताभ्रमिव शारदं

57 Dogs
crows
vultures
wolves
jackals
and other beasts
        screamed in pleasure
seeing the feast
in front of them

58 Rakṣasas
and spirits
        screeched
        and howled
Various winds
        blew
        from all directions

59 Gold necklaces
        unclaimed
        on the ground

काञ्चनानि च दामानि पताकाश्च महाधनाः।
धूयमाना व्यदृश्यन्त सहसा मारुतेरिताः॥

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Mahā-Expensive flags
tattered
fluttering faintly
with each stray gust

60 White umbrellas
thousands of them
And mahā-chariot-heroes
thousands of them
With their flags
thousands of them
scattered
on the field

श्वेतच्छत्र सहस्त्राणि
सध्वजाश्च महारथाः।
विकीर्णाः समदृश्यन्त
शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः॥

61 Huge elephants
with war-flags waving
wandering in a daze
Kṣatriyas
with maces
śhakti-missiles
and bows

62 Lying on the ground
as far as the eye could see . . . .
Then, mahārāja,
Bhīṣma invoked his divine weapons

दिव्यमस्त्रमुदीरयन्

63 And, in front of all the assembled
bowmen, attacked Kaunteya-
Arjuna. Śikhaṇḍin in heavy armour
confronted him.

64 Immediately Bhīṣma withdrew his
fire-missile. Meanwhile, O rājā,
the third Pāṇḍava brother,
white-horsed Śvetavāhana-Arjuna,
eluding Bhīṣma, started decimating
your Kaurava army.

त्वरितः पाण्डवो राजन् मध्यमः श्वेतवाहनः।
निजघ्ने तावकं सैन्यं मोहयित्वा पितामहम्॥

पित्रा तुष्टेन मे पूर्वं यदा कालीमुदावहम् ।
स्वच्छन्दमरणं दत्तमवध्यत्वं रणे तथा ॥

14 [VI : 119 | 36 - 42] The P. Lāl Transcreation

35 He gave me two boons: self-willed death,
and unslayability in battle.
I think the time has come
to will my death.

तस्मान्मृत्युमहम् मन्ये प्राप्तकालमिवात्मनः

36 Realising that illimitably powerful Bhiṣma
had made up his mind,
... and Vasus in the sky

अमिततेजसः

यत् ते व्यवसितं तात
तदस्माकं अपि प्रियम् ।
तत् कुरुष्व महाराज
युद्धे बुद्धिं निवर्तय ॥ (*)

a,
tāta, dear one. (*)

asing
des,
r particles.

39 Divine
dundubhi-drums
sounded.
Flowers
rained
on Bhiṣma.

O Māriṣa!
O honour-bestowing
monarch!

40 O king! The celestial voice
was heard by none
but mahā-muscled Bhiṣma and me
(through muni Vyāsa's radiant grace).

41 O lord of the world! That Bhiṣma,
beloved of the worlds,
was willing his own death, created mahā-panic
among the gods.

42 Hearing the words of the gods,
Śāntanu's son Bhiṣma,

न च तच्छुश्रुवे कश्चित् तेषां संवदतां नृप ।
ऋते भीष्मं महाबाहुं मां चापि मुनितेजसा ॥

performer of mahā-tapasyā,
refrained from attacking Arjuna, Bībhatsu-

43 Though Arjuna harassed him
with armour-piercing arrows.
It was then, mahārāj ,
that the Bharata Pitāmaha by Śikhaṇḍin

44 Was grievously wounded in the chest
with nine sharp arrows.
Though assailed by the arrows,
the Pitāmaha of the Kauravas

45 Remained as firm as a hill , mahārāja,
in an earthquake tremor.
Smiling, and pulling taut
his Gāṇḍiva-bow, Bībhatsu

Dreadful-deed-doer
46 Arjuna fired a volley
of twentyfive arrows at Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma.
Then another burst of a hundred arrows.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

Fired
47 arrows that penetrated
Bhisma's vital parts.
Other warriors wounded Bhiṣma with
hundreds of shafts,

48 But Bhīṣma baffled them mahā-chariot-hero
with his own counter-shower.
Truly valiant Bhīṣma repulsed
the arrows of his attackers

49 With volley upon volley
of sharp knotted arrows.
The gold-winged, stone-sharpened arrows
that Śikhaṇḍin fired mahā-chariot-hero

33 My mind is made up : I will fight.
Tāta! Respected one!
That being so, favour me
with your permission. अनुज्ञातस्त्वया
O valiant hero!
I need your permission to fight. वीर
इति मे मति

34 Also, favour me with your forgiveness
if I have spoken any harsh word
against you,
if I have harmed you deliberately
or carelessly."
त्वं क्षन्तुमर्हसि

35 Bhīṣma said :
"If you cannot cast off वैरमेतद् सुदारुणम्
this terrible hatred
of the Pāṇḍavas,
very well, then : you have my permission, Karṇa.
Fight, hoping for heaven. युध्यस्व स्वर्गकाम्यया।

36 Carry out your orders,
without anger or malice ;
do the best you can,
employ all your śakti,
consistent with your conscience.
यथा शक्ति यथा उत्साहं सतां वृत्तेषु वृत्तवान्

37 You have my permission.
May you attain what you seek to attain.
With Dhanañjaya-Arjuna as agent,
you will achieve the realm
that is the reward
of a Kṣatriya who follows his dharma.

38 But discard your ahaṁkara-arrogance.
Rely on your own power and skill —
and fight !

अहं त्वामनुजानामि यदिच्छसि तदाप्नुहि।
क्षत्रधर्मजितांल्लोकानवाप्स्यसि धनञ्जयात्॥

प्रशमे हि कृतो यत्नः सुमहान् सुचिरं मया।
न चैव शकितः कर्तुं कर्ण सत्यं ब्रवीमि ते॥ 51

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VI : 122 | 39 - 40]

What is more desirable to a Kṣatriya
than a war of dharma ?

39 I tried (mahā) hard and long enough
to bring about peace.
I have failed.
This is the truth, Karṇa."

40 Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma said this (said Sañjaya).
Rādhā's son Karṇa honoured him,
mounted his chariot,
and galloped off to the tent
of your son Duryodhana.

इत्युक्तवति गाङ्गेये अभिवाद्योपमन्त्र्य च।
राधेयो रथमारुह्य प्रायात् तव सुतं प्रति॥

युध्यस्व निरहंकारो बलवीर्यव्यपाश्रयः।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते॥

ॐ

Sections 119 - 122
of the Bhīṣma Parva
of the holy Mahābhārata
end here.

CORRECTIONS

VOLUME III : THE VANA PARVA

James Chapman sends the following list of corrections required in the Vana Parva. His list for the Ādi and Sabhā was appended in the Vana Parva (pp. 1157-1160).

VANA PARVA

Page	*Line*	*Read*
[Preface p 6, 4th-from-last line] truimph		triumph
14	8	venison
30	58	your
41	12	From
54	37	care
57	23	please
58	30	murdered
65	16	In-seeing
80	10	son,
86	3	cremation
87	14	among-rājās
106	11	guessed
125	13	inexhaustible
127	10	feel
130	34	Drupada's daughter
138	32	no
141	1	Ordainer
144	23	performing
154	30	responsible
162	34	he discards
189	15	fruits
191	30	he is
262	4	giver
300	98	ascetics
311	62	he
312	2	Profusely
374	8	"I will tell [this quotation mark is never closed]
374	14	Bhīṣma
380	66	foe-crushing
381	75	Mahā-learned
398	98	sesame
405	164	gods
420	91	[delete extra space after "bull-bannered"]
431	23	[delete space after "wrong-"]
432	30	recites
434	52	realms.
441	114	[delete extra space between "his" and "pilgrimage"]
441	114	defect-removing
442	118	recites
448	117	Kṣatriya-hood, saying
460	21	mahā-expert
461	23	foe-chastiser
473	21	addition
478	4	angered
515	48	pained
519	11	poisonous
528	42	loved-and-loving
561	14	urinates
567	28	will defeat
572	18	enquire
587	46	sun-radiant
595	21	finest-of men
602	4	were
606	3	and said
633	14	[delete extra space between "victorious Yama"]
635	12	princess
636	18	princess
639	12	wolf-waisted
647	57	chaos raising
658	43	as guests
661	9	she longed for
661	12	stopped in inability
663	26	scampering away,
663	32	gone
669	86	he smiled
681	34	Keśava-Krishna assumes
701	5	ashrams
710	61	deafening
712	13	overcoming
719	98	Can be
722	21	vantage of this

Page	*Line*	*Read*
743	29	you destroy
751	1	lightning, [comma]
756	16	Pāṇḍavas
765	28	test
766	32	yoked
772	5	heaps
785	31	Brahmā
820	34	honour
824	29	It
831	21	When your
841	3	young
850	9	many
878	30	serpents
905	6	horripilating
914	18	up my mind
927	49	horses
927	51	naked
931	89	whether
935	118	by means of
938	7	changed
947	18	many
953	36	Viṣṇu,
961	34	not injure
964	11	venison
971	76	evil
971	77	Men
972	79	superiors
975	10	enormous
989	6	sound, touch, form, and taste
989	9	moving and unmoving
996	32	Forgiveness
1003	20	one."
1006	10	sorrow
1008	29	bide
1009	8	favoured Aṅgiras
1051	20	them."
1053	31	foetuses.
1053	37	wine
1054	44	sacrifices,
1057	10	Uma's yoni
1058	22	as the
1059	24	[delete dash]
1064	71	antigods!"
1070	11	Devoted
1082	7	will rule
1088	27	be squandered
1112	3	weapons.
1116	17	Samyas.

Page	*Line*	*Read*
1123	6	them
1129	1	Your
1130	9	Prosper!
1131	3	way?
1142	21	Bhīṣma
1145	19	east, west
1145	20	overcame
1152	16	Suyodhana-Duryodhana
1163	10	droṇa of
1192	15	chastising
1201	12	intelligent,
1202	16	rājā [delete to]
1202	18	Righteous
1202	18	rather than
1215	49	firefly
1217	70	manifestation
1227	3	[add space after "*Bhagavan!*"]
1237	17	into a deer
1239	37	Sītā.
1246	4	infirmities
1251	54	consoled
1253	73	reunion
1259	21	Sugriva speak
1260	26	Sugriva,
1263	55	inspired
1265	70	one eye
1270	41	artificer
1273	17	anger
1274	25	radish
1278	5	dwellers
1281	19	smashed
1290	30	If you
1298	32	Scoundrel
1302	65	he had
1319	27	her asking
1324	34	god who is
1347	10	when you
1353	25	lineage
1378	6	vowed
1384	46	glimpse
1392	66	*Amṛta*
1394	75	wasted?"
1395	84	śraddhā is dead.
1397	98	thinker
1397	98	is a fool.
1398	110	character.
1398	111	he who, with controlled senses,
1399	116	Yama.
1419	6	auspices

CORRECTIONS

VOLUMES IV : THE VIRĀṬA PARVA

Once again, I am deeply grateful to James Chapman for his meticulous attention to the printed text of my transcreation of the Virāṭa Parva.

VIRĀṬA PARVA

Page	*Line*	*Read*
7	dedication	& Barbara
7	dedication	[no period] brooks
14	21	single-handed
32	20	Durgā [line 2]
43	20	loveliest-ever
44	25	beautiful-creature
46	5	my name
47	12	Rājā-of-the Kurus
61	20	between
64	52	pure-minded
67	5	evilly.
78	56	self
84	108	lost in
86	123	never-defeated
97	13	cast into
130	3	countryside,
130	4	oppressor;
149	19	[no period]
150	21	armour
154	18	tactics
159	28	[no period]
160	31	finished.
168	15	charging.
183	61	his bow
185	15	Rādhā
197	8	taut
211	20	The sky
212	2	degrading
217	23	Gāṇḍīva-bow
223	24	full
225	13	southern
225	16	acting on
229	16	gold-caparisoned
235	19	far too
248	8	other guṇas
250	25	*Sādhu! Sādhu!*
257	12	mahā-powerful
259	5	to drag
259	10	pompous
266	39	that
268	16	Terror-stricken
269	22	Arrows
281	8	Kauravas.
282	11	delete "sed"
283	18	until he
285	30	to their abode
288	24	to the
290	13	fourfold
291	18	events
291	21	has
293	38	you
305	19	panegyric
307	31	respectfully
310	24	ten
311	31	enchantingly
314	transliteration:	Guttural
314	transliteration:	[Guttural-Palatal and Guttural-Labial devanāgari characters shifted over by 1 column]
406	12	odious

Corrections

VOLUMES V : THE UDYOGA PARVA

To James Chapman again, my deepest gratitude for lynx-eyed spotting of the following typos.

UDYOGA PARVA

Page	*Line*	*Read*	*Page*	*Line*	*Read*
5	9	his	158	24	hands
5	11	savvy	159	40	cows
5	17	spoken	160	43	plans
5	24	let	160	46	holy
6	4	immaterial	163	74	free.
24	5	what	178	30	ill-charactered
24	6	Dhrtarāstra rejects	182	57	futile
26	4	Duryodhana	198	23	praiseworthy
51	6	our	202	9	where
55	19	will	202	12	presence
60	1	entrancing	208	62	oppress
62	18	power over	215	24	appetite
62	4	me!”	224	37	is worse
63	6	smiling	226	5	fledged
63	10	tell it	232	54	outside (line 8)
66	33	lustrous	235	5	o Brahmin
68	14	horrendous	236	15	gift.
68	17	Energiser	236	15	brahmacarya’s
70	24	guardians.	241	9	that proceed
72	11	dharma.	245	13	in-breath
86	11	three-worlds’	255	35	chariot
87	16	even Vāsava	283	33	wolf
95	21	bowstring	316	20	For mahā-doom
99	6	black	326	15	his
105	2	war for	345	3	bull-brave
114	13	Abandoning	351	52	adharma
122	6	Dhanañjaya Arjuna	352	54	dog eats
124	13	regards.	354	54	its own
132	22	acrimony	359	19	in front of
133	6	artha-and-dharma	375	8	charioteer’s
141	24	actions	380	5	Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s
142	27	kāma	380	8	this
147	72	anger, greed	386	8	Krishna,
147	74	house	387	23	blow
147	76	adversity-stricken	393	1	heavily-armed
148	85	an	397	3	marvellous
149	94	helpers	406	2	mahā powerful
158	24	it should	406	4	townspeople

Page	*Line*	*Read*
406	6	To
408	20	gift, offerings.
411	24	Śiva's,
412	30	self-discipline
413	44	she left
415	55	Kuntī
415	58	other sorrows
419	90	grief
431	17	man
439	5	dynasties
442	31	chariot
446	62	sons
449	26	prepared
450	40	greater.
451	50	Pāṇḍavas.
454	17	failed
455	4,6,8, 10,11	Varuṇa
461	11	Yet they
464	5	Sea-of-milk
488	7	thousand-footed
489	13	siddhas
518	15	rājā Yayāti
521	24	kāma
525	34	kāma
526	42	[extra space after Not]
533	16	their
546	32	kāma
549	4	[extra space after "with"]
553	46	Keśava
560	35	rajas
560	38	powerlessness.
579	40	kingdom
583	14	say this to
583	17	hurt me,
584	29	Puruṣottama-Krishna
589	8	good advice
595	6	oozed
595	13	pursued my
598	36	priests
608	42	had
619	26	ruined
626	36	Dharma's son
649	27	[extra space bet. "of" & "Pāṇḍu"]
652	22	for every elephant
652	22	for every horse
656	28	cirmsoned
658	6	Yudhiṣṭhira [fix double ,,]
659	15	Dhanañjaya
677	84	Humiliated
686	32	his hair
698	28	you boast
699	33	blood on
699	34	doom of
711	14	leader
726	27	and [delete]
726	27	as a [delete a]
731	20	brave
732	6	husband
745	2	take
779	11	an
790	13	change
818	11	alongside
822	throughout	[Guttural]

THE STORY'S THE THING

Pradip Bhattacharya

The Mahabharata of Vyasa Books 1 and 2:
The Complete Adi and Sabha Parvas
transcreated from Sanskrit by P. Lal,
WRITERS WORKSHOP, Kolkata, 2005,
pp. 1218 and 499. Rs 1200 and Rs 600 (hardback),
Rs 800 and Rs 500 (flexiback).

(A special numbered-and-signed edition has original hand-painted frontispieces by a patua-artist of Jagannatha temple, thematically appropriate for each volume)

> "Shells were exploding over Leningrad. Enemy bombs were falling on the streets stirring up clouds of dust. On one of those spring days during the siege, Sanscrit language was being heard in the building of the Academy of Sciences on the Neva River embankment, in a room overlooking the side that was safer during the artillery strikes. First, in the original, and then in translation, Vladimir Kalyanov, a specialist on India, was reading Mahabharata, a wonderful monument of Indian literature, to his colleagues, who remained in the besieged city. He had started the translation before the war. He translated during the hard winter of 1941, with no light, no fuel and no bread in the city. Two volumes of books–one published in Bombay and the other in Calcutta–were lying on the table in the room. In the dim light of a wick lamp, he was comparing these two editions of Mahabharata, trying to find the best and the most accurate translation of the Sanscrit into Russian...The translation of the Indian epic into Russian was never interrupted."[1]

What is it in this epic-of-epics, eight times larger than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined–denounced as "a literary monster" by Winternitz, and as "monstrous chaos" by Oldenberg–that appeals so irresistibly to the modern man in search of his soul, when the audience for which it was composed–

the enthroned monarch and the forest-dwelling sage–has long sunk into the dark backward and abysm of time? Vyasa, master raconteur, weaves together a bewildering skein of threads to create a many-splendoured web from which there was no escape for the listener of those days and there is none even for the reader of today. The thousands of years that separate us from Vyasa have not, surprisingly, dimmed the magic of his art that had entranced Janamejaya and Shaunaka.

We find here a storyteller *par excellence* laying bare, at times quite pitilessly, the existential predicament of man in the universe. If, later in the epic, Vyasa shows us what man has made of man, here, in the very first book, he plumbs the depths of the humiliatingly petty pre-occupations of the Creator's noblest creation. Indeed, the dilemmas the characters find themselves enmeshed in cannot even be glorified as 'tragic'. Perhaps, that is why we find the epic so fascinating–for, how many of us are cast in the heroic mould? We do not have to strain the imagination to reach out and identify with Yayati or Shantanu. We need no willing suspension of disbelief to understand why the Brahmin Drona should sell his knowledge to the highest bidder, or why Drupada does not protest too much when his daughter is parcelled out among five brothers who had routed him in a skirmish. Passions do, indeed, spin the plot and we are betrayed by what is false within. Then, as now, there is no need to look for a villain manoeuvring without.

If we resonate in empathy with the sense of tears in human things, we also thrill with joy on meeting the indomitable spirit of woman in an epic that many misconceive as celebrating a male chauvinist outlook. Whether it is Shakuntala proudly asserting her integrity and berating the mean-minded Dushyanta in open court; or Devayani demanding that Kacha return her love and imperiously brushing aside a lust-crazed husband; or Kunti refusing to pervert herself into a mindless son-producing womb to gratify the twisted desires of a frustrated husband–time and again it is woman standing forth in all the splendour of her spirited autonomy as a complete human being that rivets our attention and evokes our admiration.

This transcreation by Dr. P. Lal – Padma Shri awardee, Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow and Mircea Eliade Professor–allows the epic to grow on the reader through 19 chapters without any critical paraphernalia, for "the story's the thing, catching conscience of

commoner and king" as he writes so perceptively. A companion volume contains the individual prefaces, notes and glossaries to the 26 fascicules of the original edition.[2] This is the only English rendering that follows the Sanskrit text of the epic verse by verse as it is current today (the "vulgate") in all the recensions –"the full ragbag version" as he puts it–eschewing the not very consistent text of the Critical Edition that J.A.B. van Buitenen translates with its numerous excisions. Unlike the 19th century translators K.M. Ganguli and M.N. Dutt, Lal neither omits sexual passages "for obvious reasons", nor Latinises them. It is also the sole translation that is a transcreation, consciously aiming at providing a sense of the original by effortlessly shifting from lyrical verse to trenchant prose as Vyasa's text demands, while preserving the Sanskrit ethos. It is a transcreation that is, above all, meant to be heard. After all, that is what the hermits in the Naimisha forest were doing. Lal himself has been giving public readings of his transcreation every Sunday from October 1999, bringing home the oral and aural quality of the epic. How true are Vyasa's prophetic words in the *Âdivamsâvatarana* ("Down-comings") chapter:

"What is in this epic
    on Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha,
may be elsewhere.
    What is not in this epic,
is nowhere else...
    It is recited in the present,
it will be recited in the future."

We are not brought up short by jarring medieval turns of phrase that are anything but Vyasa as with van Buitenen's "barons", "serfs", "chivalry" and the like, nor have we to stumble over the archaic Victorian prose of Ganguli and Dutt. *Mahâtmâ, pranâma, namaskâra, âshrama* and similar words, redolent with the flavour of Bhâratavarsha's air and earth and water, abound. The opening verses describing Creation are some of the most majestic compositions of all time, transcreated with biblical and Rigvedic reverberations:

"At first, there was no light,
no radiance, only darkness;
then was born the egg of Brahmâ,
exhaustless and mighty seed of life...

Lal's verse rendering is far better than any of the translations

so far; terse yet poetically evocative and mellifluous:

"She stood, a black-
eyed beauty on the hill-top,
statuesque,
like a golden girl.
The hill, its creepers,
its bushes, all flamed
With the golden beauty
of the golden girl."

Tapati is another Cleopatra indeed in Chitraratha-Enobarbus' glowing description which is immeasurably superior to the Ganguli and van Buitenen prosaic translations. Or take the unconventional "râkshasan" rhythm he adopts for Hidimb's slavering monologue where one feels as if Vyasa were writing in English itself; so natural, unforced and appropriate is the transcreation:

"My favourite
Food!
My mouth
Waters...
My sharp
Eight teeth
Will bite
Delicious
Meat.
I'll crunch
The throat
And veins,
And drink
Hot
Fresh
Bubbly
Blood."

The *Âstîka* chapter has Vyasa at his best as the weaver of tales: stories spring from within one another in delightful succession till the *parva* becomes a veritable Chinese box of unending surprises with Sauti the raconteur weaving a magic web spellbinding his audience.

James Fitzgerald, the translator of the critical text of the *Strî* and *Shânti* parvas published in 2004 makes an extremely important point about the epic:

> "The Mahâbhârata argued for a cultural revolution that was historically successful in several important ways...I have come to see the Mahâbhârata not simply as an ancient monument of bygone times. Many themes and motifs in this epic require consideration by the thoughtful people of all kinds today, whether they are particularly interested in India and its history or not."[3]

Looking back at the *Âdi parva*, a multitude of salient features–thematic, stylistic and eschatological–swim into one's ken. Here we get to know that the epic has three beginnings: "Some read the *Mahâbhârata* from the first mantra, others begin with the story of Âstîka; others begin with Uparichara." There is the recurrent *motif* of Lust in Action with its attendant Quest for Immortality. Initially, they emerge as two separate themes in the Churning-of-the-Ocean and the Kacha-Devayani episodes, which coalesce in the existentially tragic figure of Yayati. Yayati, inheriting the taint of lust from his father Nahusha, sums up in himself the entire experience of the self-destructive poison of lust, with its initial violence of sensual orgiastic bliss, seeking in vain to gorge itself to satiation until the body is worn out. Yet, the flames of desire continue to lick the spirit into fresh agonies of torment, forcing Yayati into the very apotheosis of lust in replacing his worn-out senses by the vibrantly youthful body of his son, only to discover that lust is insatiable. Yayati's life, indeed, is an interesting study in *hubris* that culminates in a veritable *peripeteia* as he is flung down from Heaven in a total reversal of situation, till he who prided himself on being the most generous in the giving of gifts (he even gifted away his daughter to earn unprecedented merit) is forced to accept gifts from his own grandchildren to win back his place in *Svarga*. Unfortunately, this blood-taint follows his dynasty as its nemesis, virtually wiping it out. It kills Pându. The Pândavas are his foster-children by unknown surrogates, veritable parvenus aspiring to the ancestral throne.

Yet another pattern is that of the disqualified eldest son beginning, again, with Yayati whose elder brother Yati becomes a sage. Of Yayati's five sons it is the youngest, Puru, who becomes the dynast. Next it is Riksha, Ajamidha's youngest son, who founds the Hastinâpura dynasty. Of Pratipa's sons, the Brahmins challenge Devapi's right to the throne because of his skin-disease. Like Puru, the youngest son Shantanu becomes king of

Hastinâpura. Instead of Devavrata, Shantanu's eldest son, it is the youngest, Vichitravirya, who becomes king.

At this stage, the theme of the disqualified eldest is interwoven with an interesting set of parallels: Bhishma-Vyasa and Satyavati-Kunti. Both Bhishma and Vyasa are born of Gangâ and Satyavati respectively before the dynastically crucial Shantanu-Satyavati marriage. Both are unmarried and deeply involved with the Kurus, one as protector, the other as surrogate-dynast. Kunti, like her grandmother-in-law, has a pre-marital son who disappears immediately after birth. Here the Parallelism dovetails into the Pattern, for Karna, the eldest Kaunteya, cannot inherit because of his illegitimacy. In relation to the Pandavas, he stands much in the same relationship as Bhishma to the Shantvanas. The parallel is stressed deliberately in the repeated confrontations between the two, culminating in Karna's Achilles-like sulking in his tent so long as Bhishma leads the armies. All the eight Pandava sons are killed and Kunti's dynasty continues only through Parikshit, Arjuna's grandson via his junior wife Subhadra, a Yadava, thereby restoring the throne to the line of Yadu, Yayati's eldest disinherited son.

An allied *motif* is the difficulty in begetting successors. Beginning with Bharata who had to adopt Bharadvâja, it recurs with Shantanu who deliberately discards the eminently eligible Devavrata only to have his eldest son by Satyavati die prematurely, followed by the death of his second son Vichitravîrya also without any heirs. The engendering of Dhritarâshtra and Pandu is itself a traumatic affair and both are physically challenged. Pandu, cursed to die in intercourse, cannot beget children. Gandhari aborts her inordinately long pregnancy out of sheer frustration. The Pandavas lose all their sons. Their grandson Parikshit, while in Uttarâ's womb, is mortally wounded by Ashvatthama and has to be revived by Krishna, just as Gandhari's aborted foetus is saved by Krishna-Dvaipâyana-Vyasa.

From the stylistic view-point, there are such highlights as the all-prose *Paushya parva* and the dynastic account after Samvarana-Tapati; the story of Yayati almost wholly in dialogue-form; and the majestic Vedic chants in the *Paushya, Pauloma* and *Khândavadahana parvas*, all addressed to Agni, the mystic fire of the *Rig Veda*. The Vyâsan technique–or perhaps the raconteur Sauti's–is to weave in skilled unmindfulness: present the pith of the matter first, allowing details to be drawn out gradually through

answers to questions skilfully interposed at critical stages of the narrative. It is not only the professional bards, Sauti *et. al*, who recite the epic, but also Brahmins such as Lomasha, Mârkandeya and, of course, Vaishampâyana. It is not, as van Buitenen argues, that the baronial-bardic lore was giving way to a tradition of wandering reciters of brahminic lore. After all, Vaishampâyana recited the epic *before* it was picked up by Sauti.

The *Âdi parva*, carries Vedic mythology on to a new stage where Indra has been reduced just to being king of the gods, worsted by the bird Garuda and the men Krishna and Arjuna, powerless to protect Takshaka who seeks sanctuary, paying the price of arrogance by being imprisoned in a cave by Shiva and forced to incarnate on earth. He is no longer the mighty rescuer of the celestial herds stolen by the Panis, riving open Vritra or Vala to release the celestial streams of light. Even Vishnu does not play much of a role here, the accent having shifted to a new duo of divine sages: Nara and Nârâyana. By identifying Krishna and Arjuna with them, beginning with the invocatory verses, the new myth is given more 'body' and appeals more powerfully to the popular imagination. As the epic unfolds, it reveals more and more of an infusion of a devotional strain orientated towards Shiva and Krishna, particularly in the discourses of Bhishma lying on his bed of arrows. The day of Vedic Indra, Agni and Varuna is past and the purânik Shiva-Vishnu rivalry is implied through the strenuous attempts to make each extol the greatness of the other in the *Anushâsana* and *Shânti parvas.*

How does the *Âdi Parva* leave us where the story of the Kurukshetra War and the Pândava-Kaurava conflict are concerned? The seeds of the fratricidal feud are sown during the childhood sports, culminating in the lacquer-house episode. In the meantime, a new figure has been introduced: Karna, who will figure prominently in the coming feud. The Drona-inspired attack on Drupada has laid the basis of a deep hatred of the Kurus in the defeated king that moves him to seek alliance with the Pândavas as a counterpoise against the Dhârtarâshtras and Drona. The intervening period, occupied by the Hidimbâ, Chitraratha and Baka episodes, is the training ground for the future inheritors of the Kuru kingdom. Simultaneously, these events help to span the time-gap and convey the sense of the long duration of the exile. The marriage with Draupadi and the coming of Krishna provide the Panchala-Vrishni-Pandava triangular set-up to oppose

the Kurus at Hastinapura even more effectively with the establishment of a new kingdom at Khandavaprastha on the Yamuna facing Hastinapura on the Ganga.

The next book of the epic, *Sabha Parva*, is concerned with these two capitals and their two Halls of Kings. Vaishampayana has told Janamejaya that the story of his ancestors is concerned with division and loss, battle and restoration. In the *Sabha Parva* the narrative moves swiftly from the Pandavas' escape from Duryodhana's death-dealing moves to their restoration as heirs to the kingdom through the winning of the Panchala princess Draupadi in a contest of skill. Draupadi emerges gratuitously at the end of a sacrificial rite performed to wreak vengeance, like the *kritya* sent by the Kashi prince against Krishna to avenge his father's death and the *kritya* invoked by demons to bring them the suicidal Duryodhana to restore his morale. Yajnaseni also resembles the blue and red (*nilalohita*) *kritya* of the *Rig* and *Atharva* Vedas. Like Janamejaya's serpent-holocaust ritual performed by priests in black robes, the rite draws on non-*shrauta* tradition, a departure from the normal sacred sacrifice and partakes of the nature of *abhichara* (black-magic), death-dealing, because of which Upayaja, whom Drupada approaches first, refuses to perform it. Here, too, there is a resemblance with Kunti because Durvasa's boon is described as *abhichara samyuktam...varam mantragramam*, invocations linked to black magic. In particular, it is linked to Yudhishthira's birth. Pandu specifically urges Kunti to summon Dharma with *abhichara* rites, *upacharabhicharabhyam*.[4]

Draupadi's emergence is an unintended bonus for Drupada who performed the rite for obtaining a son to kill Drona. Her birth is accompanied by a skiey announcement that this lovely dark (Krishnaa) lady will destroy all Kshatriyas. Therefore, she appears to fulfil not Drupada's purpose but that of the gods responding to the Earth's anguished prayer to lighten her burden of oppressive Kshatriyas. Significantly, despite being aware of this announcement –or being conscious of it–the gods-engendered Pandavas wed her and destroy the Kauravas whose birth is entirely human. Her marriage to the son of Yama-Dharma, Yudhishthira, reinforces her ominous links with death. Her very first appearance is as a mysterious *femme fatale* in the context of a twelve year sacrifice that Yama, the god of death, performs on the banks of the Ganga, during which there is no death in the world. In Ganga's waters her tears turn into golden lotuses that

attract Indra whom she leads into a nether-world like cave where four other Indras lie imprisoned for rebirth as the Pandavas.[5] Like Athena springing *cap a pie* out of Zeus' head and Durga taking shape from the combined fury of the gods, Yajnaseni emerges in the bloom of youth from the fire-altar, which is repeatedly cited as a simile for her hour-glass figure. Her manifestation does not require the matrix of a human womb, ignoring the absence of Drupada's queen who does not respond to the priest's summons as her make-up is unfinished. "Panchali", as she is called when she first appears, is pregnant with double meaning: "of Panchala" and "puppet". This presages how she lives her entire life, acting out not just her father's vengeful obsession, but as an instrument of the gods to bring death back to the world, which had halted during Yama's *yajna* on the banks of the Ganga.

As the only *kanya* whose appearance is described in detail, the description is worth noting:

> "eye-ravishing Panchali,
> black-and-smiling-eyed...
> Dark-skinned Panchali,
> Lotus-eyed lady,
> Wavy-haired Panchali
> Hair like dark blue clouds,
> Shining coppery carved nails,
> Soft eye-lashes,
> Swelling breasts and
> Shapely thighs...
> Blue lotus
> Fragrance for a full krosha
> Flowed from her body...
> Neither short
> nor tall, neither dark nor pale,
> with wavy dark-blue hair,
> eyes like autumn-lotus leaves,
> fragrant like the lotus...
> extraordinarily accomplished,
> soft-spoken and gentle...
> She is the last to sleep,
> the first to wake
> even earlier than the early-rising
> cowherds and shepherds.

Her sweat-bathed face is lovely,
like the lotus, like
the jasmine; slim-waisted like
the middle of the sacred
vedi, long-haired, pink-lipped,
and smooth-skinned." (I.169.44-46, II.65.33-37)

Vyasa categorically states that the creator had so fashioned her that her loveliness surpassed that of all women (reminiscent of Valmiki on Ahalya) and enchanted everyone. The South Indian cult of Draupadi sculpts her holding a closed lotus bud symbolising virginity, as opposed to the open lotus of fertility Subhadra holds. "The parrot symbolizing the principle of desire," writes Archna Sahni, "is poised atop the bud to tease it open, so as to begin creation. Draupadi, carrying the two interdependent and interactive symbols of desire and creation is none other than the goddess as the genetrix of all things."[6] The kings in the *svayamvara* hall are described as so tormented by the arrows of desire (*kandarpabanabhinipiditangah*) that even friends hated each other (I.186.5). When the brothers look upon her in the potter's hut, they all loose their hearts to her. Noticing this, Yudhishthira recalls Vyasa's prophecy and announces that she will be their common wife (I.190.12-14). Kunti's announcement is by no means fortuitous. It is carefully planned. We tend to overlook the fact that Yudhishthira and the twins are already with her when Arjuna and Bhima return with Draupadi from the *svayamvara sabha*. Kunti is desperately keen that her words do not prove to be false. Vyasa turns up at the right moment to persuade the reluctant Drupada that having five husbands is pre-ordained for Draupadi.

Dark like Gandhakali, hence named Krishnâ, and gifted with blue-lotus fragrance wafting for a full *krosha* like Yojanagandha, she "knows"–like her mother-in-law Kunti and great grandmother-in-law Gandhakali–more than one man. Like Kunti she is also described as an amorous lover in the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* (IV.115.73): *Draupadi bhratripati ca pancanam kamini tatha.* Dr. Nrisimha Prasad Bhaduri[7] records an account narrated by Pandit Anantalal Thakur in which Duryodhana's wife Bhanumati sneers at Draupadi asking how she manages five husbands, "*kena vrittena Draupadi pandavan adhitishthasi*". Draupadi swiftly responds that among her in-laws the number of husbands has always been rather excessive, "*pativriddhi kule mama*"–a right royal riposte that encompasses in a fell swoop her mother-in-law Kunti,

grandmothers-in-law Ambika and Ambalika (who are Bhanumati's too) and great-grandmother-in-law Satyavati. The story shows how the popular memory has treasured Draupadi for her acute intelligence and forceful personality that took nothing lying down. Yet, hers is an immeasurably greater predicament compared to those women of her husbands' family. Where theirs were momentary encounters, Draupadi has to live out her entire life parcelled out among five men within the sacrament of marriage.[8] She shares with Satyavati and Kunti an imperishable, ever-renewable virginity:

> 'The divine rishi, narrating this wondrous, miraculous and excellent event said,
>
> "Lovely-waisted and noble-minded indeed, she became virgin anew after each marriage"'
>
> (I.197.14)

Is there a link with the Vedic marital hymns where the bride is first offered to Soma, Gandharva and Agni and only then to the human bridegroom as her fourth husband?

> *Somah prathamo vivide gandharvo vivida uttarah/*
> *Tritiyo agnishte patisturiyaste manyushyajah//*
> "Soma obtained her first of all; next the Gandharva was her lord.
> Agni was thy third husband: now one born of woman is thy fourth.
> Soma to the Gandharva, and to Agni the Gandharva gave:
> And Agni hath bestowed on me riches and sons and this my spouse."[9]

According to the Villipputtur's Tamil version of the epic, Draupadi bathes in fire after each marriage, emerging chaste like the pole star.[10] This emergence from fire reinforces the *kritya* image. It also reminds us of Rider Haggard's "She-who-must-be-obeyed", renewing her youth by bathing in fire, an Anima archetype. She transforms herself into stone, like Ahalya, when touched by the demon Kempirnacuran by invoking her chastity in an act of truth.[11] She resembles Madhavi, ancestress of the Kurus, in retaining her virginity despite being many-husbanded.[12] Kunti herself describes Draupadi to Krishna as *sarvadharmopacayinam*[13] (fosterer of all virtues), using the identical term by which Yayati describes his daughter Madhavi while bestowing her upon Galava.[14] The conjunction of both

occurrences of this epithet in the same *parva* is surely deliberate on part of the seer-poet for drawing our attention to these correspondences. Madhavi regains virginity every time after giving birth to a son each to the kings Haryashva of Ayodhya, Divodasa of Varanasi and Ushinara of the North West and to the sage Vishvamitra. Even after this Yayati holds a bridegroom-choice ceremony for her, but at that point she chooses to retire to the forest and become an ascetic. Sharadandayani, whom Pandu mentions when persuading Kunti to have children by others, stood at night at crossroads and chose a passer-by from whom she had three sons. However, neither Madhavi nor Sharadandayani nor Kunti had to live out their lives adjusting repeatedly to a different husband from among five brothers at specified intervals, so that by turn she had to relate to each as elder or younger brother-in-law. Possibly the only comparison can be with two women Yudhishthira mentions, both non-Kshatriyas: Marisha-Varkshi mother of Daksha married to the ten Prachetas *rishis* and Jatila spouse of seven sages, of whose lives we know nothing else.

A true "virgin", Panchali has a mind of her very own. Both Krishna and Krishnâ appear for the first time together in the *svayamvara sabha* and make decisive interventions. It is Draupadi's sudden and wholly unexpected refusal to accept Karna as a suitor (significantly, here Vyasa does not call her 'Panchali', the puppet) that alters the entire complexion of the assembly and, indeed, the course of the epic itself. The affront to Karna sows the seeds of the assault on her in the dice-game. It is her *sakha*-to-be, Krishna, who steps in to put an end to the skirmish between the furious kings and the disguised Pandavas.

The Southern recension of the epic states that in an earlier birth as Nalayani (also named Indrasena) she was married to Maudgalya, an irascible sage afflicted with leprosy. She was so devoted to her abusive husband that when a finger of his dropped into their meal, she took it out and calmly ate the rice without revulsion. Pleased by this, Maudgalya offered her a boon. She asked him to make love to her in five lovely forms. As she was insatiable, Maudgalya got fed up and reverted to ascesis. When she remonstrated and insisted that he continue their love life, he cursed her to be reborn and have five husbands to satisfy her sexual craving. Thereupon she practised severe penance and pleased Shiva, obtaining the boon of regaining virginity after

being with each husband.[15] According to the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* (*Prakriti khanda,* 14.54 and *Krishna Janma khanda* 116.22-23), she is the reincarnation of the shadow-Sita who was Vedavati reborn after molestation at Ravana's hands, and would become the Lakshmi of the fourteen Mahendras in Svarga, of whom five incarnated as the Pandavas. Because she existed in the three *yugas* (in Satya as Vedavati, in Treta as shadow-Sita and in Dvapara as Draupadi), she is known as *trihayani* and being *vaishnavi krishnabhakta* is named "Krishnâ". Draupadi's astonishing intellectual acumen also has its roots in Vedavati, who was so named because the Vedas were ever present on the tip of her tongue (*ibid.*14.64):

satatam murttimantashca vedashcatvar eva ca/
santi yasyashca jihvagre sa ca vedavati smrita//

Significantly, this text states (14.57) that after the fire ordeal, the lovely and youthful shadow-Sita was advised by Rama and Agni to worship Shiva, While doing so, *kamatura pativyagra prarthayanti punah punah,* tormented by sexual desire and eager for a husband, she prayed again and again, asking the three-eyed god five times for a husband.

As Draupadi replaces Kunti as the central female interest in the epic with the *Sabha Parva,* there appears to be a sudden decline in the status of women itself. This begins with her silent consent to the shocking dispensation of becoming the common wife of five brothers. Her father and brother protest, but she does not utter a word throughout the multiple exchanges between them, Kunti, Yudhishthira and Vyasa. This is significant because, immediately before this, she astonished everyone by publicly refusing to accept Karna as a suitor despite Drupada's announcement that anyone passing the test would win her hand. The very first night in the potter's hut sees mother-in-law and daughter-in-law paralleling each other in the manner in their sleeping postures. Kunti lies horizontally at the Pandavas' heads, while Yajnaseni lays herself down similarly at their feet, silently. Does Vyasa's story of her asking for many husbands in an earlier birth represent a psychological truth about Krishnâ the *kanyâ*?[16]

As women, both Kunti and Draupadi are singularly ill fated. Like her mother-in-law, Draupadi never enjoys possession of her first love. Kunti had chosen Pandu above all kings in the *svayamvara* ceremony and soon thereafter lost him to the voluptuous Madri. How deeply this pained her is voiced frankly

as she finds Pandu lying dead in her co-wife's arms (I.125.23). Similarly, before Arjuna's turn came to be with Draupadi, he chose exile. Her anguish at losing him to Ulupi, Chitrangada and Subhadra in succession is expressed with moving *abhimâna*, hurt self-image:

> "Go son of Kunti,
> where she of the Satvatas is!
> A second knot loosens the first,
> however tightly re-tied." (I.220.17)

Later, the manner in which she is described by her husband Yudhishthira, as he stakes her like chattel at dice, wipes out her very individuality as a human being. We are reminded that when she emerged from the fire-altar she was called "Panchali", "puppet". The manner in which she is publicly humiliated bring home Naomi Wolf's condemnation of masculine culture's efforts to "punish the slut", the sexually independent woman who crosses the ambiguous *lakshmana-rekha* separating "good" from "bad".[17] Vimla Patil, editor of *Femina,* writes, "Most Indian women would agree that like this passionate heroine of the Mahabharata, millions of women are publicly humiliated and even raped as a punishment for challenging the male will or for 'talking back' at a man. Many men are known to use violence against wives merely because they 'back-answer'!"[18]

A telling example of this occurs in Kashiram Das' early 18th century version of the epic in Bengali rhymed verse. During the forest exile, Draupadi prides herself on her fame as a sati exceeding that of any king. Krishna crushes her pride by creating an unseasonal mango that she craves for and has Arjuna pluck for her. Krishna warns that this is the only food of a terrible ascetic, whose anger will turn all of them into ashes, and that only if they confess their secret desires will the mango be re-fixed to its branch. The mango almost touches the tree as the brothers state what obsesses each of them, but falls down when Draupadi states that revenge is her sole desire. Arjuna threatens to kill her, and then she has to confess that having Karna as her sixth husband has been her secret wish. Bhima, her invariable rescuer, upbraids her unmercifully for her evil nature.[19] Here we have evidence of a male backlash expressed through inventive myth-making.

Just when we had least expected it, suddenly we find a complete reversal from meek passivity to an extraordinarily articulate and forceful expression of a personality that towers

above all the men in the royal court. Fire-altar-born Yajnaseni shocks everyone by challenging the Kuru elders' very concept of dharma in a crisis where the modern woman would collapse in hysterics. Her questions show her to be intellectually far superior to all the courtiers. Instead of meekly obeying her husband's summons, as expected from her conduct so far, she sends back a query that remains unanswered till the end of the epic: can a gambler, having lost himself, stake his wife at all? She has a brilliant mind, is utterly "one-in-herself" in Esther Harding's phrase for the "virgin", and does not hesitate to berate the Kuru elders for countenancing wickedness. As Karna directs her to be dragged away to the servants' quarters, she cries out to her silent husbands. Finding no response, with quicksilver presence of mind she seizes upon a social ritual to wrest some moments of respite from pillaging hands. Her speech drips with sarcasm. The elders whom she ceremoniously salutes, deliberately using the word "duty," have remained silent in the face of Vidura's exhortation to do their duty and protect the royal daughter-in-law. Significantly, it is only Vikarna, a junior Kaurava, and a maidservant's son Vidura who voice their outrage. Prof. Lal faithfully sticks to the original which says that it was Dharma (Vidura's other name) who protected Draupadi when she was sought to be stripped. The miraculous intervention by Krishna is shown up as an interpolation in the *Vana Parva* where he states he was unable to prevent the disastrous dice-game being away fighting Shalva. Indeed, the very episode of stripping is never referred to by Draupadi herself in her numerous upbraidings nor by anyone else–not even by Bhima when killing Duhshasana. Let us attend to Draupadi's choice of words:

> "One duty remains, which
> I must now do. Dragged
> by this mighty hero,
> I nearly forgot. I
> was so confused.
> Sirs, I bow to all of you, all my elders
> and superiors. Forgive me for
> not doing so earlier.
> It was not all my fault,
> gentlemen of the sabha." (II.67.30)

It is a "mighty hero" who is dragging into public view his single-cloth-clad menstruating sister-in-law by her hair. She has

"nearly forgot" her duty, while the elders are wholly oblivious of theirs, despite being reminded by a maidservant's son. It is surely not her fault that she is being outraged, and certainly it is not she who is "so confused", but rather the Kuru elders of whom Bhishma says,

> "Our elders, learned in dharma,
> Drona and others, sit
> Here with lowered eyes like dead men
> with life-breaths gone." (II.69.20)

Yajnaseni succeeds in winning back freedom for her enslaved husbands and Karna pays her a remarkable tribute, saying that none of the world's renowned beautiful women had accomplished such a feat: like a boat she has rescued her husbands who were drowning in a sea of sorrows (II.72.1-3). Later, (*Udyoga Parva* 29.41-42), Krishna reiterates her remarkable deed saying:

> "That day Krishnâ did a deed exceedingly pure and difficult.
> Herself and the Pândavas she lifted up
> as in a ship from the swell of the terrible sea."

With striking dignity, she refuses to take the third boon Dhritarashtra offers. For, with her husbands free and in possession of their weapons, she does not need a boon from anyone.

The transformation of the jungle that was Khandavaprastha into Indraprastha is founded on a terrible holocaust of flora, fauna and human beings that reaps as fruits not only the wondrous Maya-*sabhâ* (that materialises not in a trice but takes fourteen months to build) but also an implacable pursuit of vengeance by Takshaka Naga culminating in the assassination of Arjuna's grandson, Parikshit. This is also the occasion when the weapons that the heroes are renowned for are given to them: Arjuna's Gandiva bow, Kapidhvaja chariot and Devadutta conch; Bhima's club; Krishna's discus and Kaumodaki mace. Khandavaprastha was the capital of Yayati, and it is here that the restoration of the descendants of his disinherited eldest son Yadu takes place when the Pandavas establish Krishna's grandson Vajra in Indraprastha.

In this *parva*, we are in the thick of political intrigue. Krishna uses the Pandavas to remove the greatest threat to his clan: Jarasandha of Magadha, clearing the way for Yudhishthira being crowned emperor. Then, in the coronation ceremony, he removes a rival clansman, Shishupala. The doomsday bell begins to toll with the insult to Duryodhana emanating from the magical assembly hall, where the Pandavas behave like the *noveau-riche*,

much in the manner of the "night-grown mushroom" Gaveston in Edward II's court. The devastating reply to the thoughtless slight is tortuously prepared and delivered in the Kaurava Sabha in Hastinapura, repeating the earlier exile-gambit. Nothing prepares Krishna and the Pandavas for the catastrophic game of dice in which Yudhishthira's greed (as he admits in the *Vana Parva*) for winning Hastinapura leads to Draupadi (significantly, called "Panchali" here, meaning "puppet") being staked and lost. But this puppet breaks out of the assigned role and exposes the feet of clay of the colossi we presume the Kuru elders to be, putting a question that remains unanswered to the very end of the epic: has she been rightly won or not?

It is Yudhishthira's craving to be emperor that proves to be the apple of Eris, because of which he agrees to Krishna's plan to kill Jarasandha, ignoring Narada's warning that the Rajasuya sacrifice brings ruinous war in its wake. The warning of what is to come is heralded by Shishupala's abusive assault on Krishna There is a chariot duel between Krishna and Shishupala (described by Dhritarashtra in the *Udyoga Parva*, and at length in Southern recensions of the *Sabha Parva*), and no miraculous decapitation as is popularly believed. This is accompanied by a host of ill omens, to which the Pandavas, drunk on their new-found wealth and status, remain blind. The deadly riposte this time is not a sugar-coated poison-pill like Varanavata, but full thirteen years of exile in the forests. One suspects that Yudhishthira secretly welcomes the forest exile, glad in his heart of hearts to be free from the burden of kingship. We find him ill at ease in the *Sabha Parva* and most himself in exile amid the sylvan surroundings of *Vana Parva*, which we look forward to in the P Lal transcreation.

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[1] http://www.300.years.spb.ru/eng/3_spb_3.html?id=5
[2] A detailed examination of the entire *Adi Parva* transcreation is available in Pradip Bhattacharya, *Themes and Structure in the Mahabharata: the Adi Parva* (Dasgupta & Co., Calcutta).

[3] J.L. Fitzgerald, *The Mahâbhârata* vol. 7, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. x

[4] C. Minkowski: "Snakes, Sattras and the Mahabharata" in *Essays on the Mahabharata* ed. A. Sharma, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1991, p. 391 and A. Hiltebeitel: *Rethinking the Mahabharata* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 188.

[5] Hiltebeitel *ibid.* pp. 190-191.

[6] Archna Sahni, personal communication and "Unpeeling the layers of Draupadi" forthcoming.

[7] Dr. Nrisingha Prasad Bhaduri: "Draupadi", *Barttaman*, annual number1396, p.26.

[8] Pratibha Ray portrays this at length in her novel *Yajnaseni: the story of Draupadi* (RUPA, New Delhi, 1995, translated by Pradip Bhattacharya). Roopa Ganguli conveyed the anguish dramatically in the Bengali teleserial *Draupadi.*

[9] *The Hymns of the Rigveda* 10.58.40-41, translated by R.T.H. Griffith, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1973. Repeated in the *Atharva Veda* XIV.2.3. Sayana explains that till sexual desire arises in the girl, Soma enjoys her. When it has arisen, Gandharva has her and transfers her at marriage to Agni from whom man takes her to produce wealth and sons cf. S.D. Singh, *Polyandry in Ancient India* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978).

[10] Alf Hiltebeitel: *The Cult of Draupadi,* Vol. I, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1988 p. 438.

[11] Hiltebeitel *ibid.* p. 220, 290. Greek mythology is replete with instances of metamorphoses undergone by virgins to protect themselves against rapists (Daphne, Chloe etc.).

[12] Three outstanding artistic creations on the predicament of Madhavi are Subodh Ghose's remarkably insightful Bengali retelling "Galav and Madhavi" in *Bharat Prem Katha* (translated by Pradip Bhattacharya, RUPA, Calcutta, 1990), Bhisham Sahni's play *Madhavi* (translated by Ashok Bhalla, Seagull, Calcutta, 2002) and Dr. Chitra Chaturvedi's Hindi novel *Tanaya* (Lokbharti Prakashan, Allahabad, 1989).

[13] *Mahabharata,* V.137.16.

[14] *Ibid.* V.115.11. A. Hiltebeitel: *The Ritual of Battle,* Cornell University Press, 1976, p. 222-4.

[15] Vettam Mani: *Puranic Encyclopaedia,* Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1975, p. 549. He does not provide the reference to the source of this story. Also M.V. Subramaniam: *The Mahabharata Story: Vyasa & Variations,* Higginbothams, Madras, 1967, p. 46-47. The Jaina *Nayadhammakahao* picks this up and tells of suitorless Sukumarika reborn as a celestial courtesan because of her passion who is born as Draupadi (B.N. Sumitra Bai's "The Jaina Mahabharata" in *Essays on the Mahabharata* ed. A. Sharma, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1991, p.253).

[16] Dr S.D. Singh describes this as "the significant but eloquent silence of Draupadi. She is neither appalled nor outraged by the prospect of Pandava

polyandry...She is exceedingly trustful and as willing as a woman could be, if her deportment serves as any guide." *Polyandry in Ancient India* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978) p. 92-93.

[17] Naomi Wolf, best-selling feminist author and advisor to the American President and Vice-President, in *Promiscuities* quoted in *TIME*, 8.11.1999, p. 25.

[18] *Op.cit.* http://www.tribuneindia.com/2002/20021027/herworld.htm#1.

[19] "Draupadi's pride crushed" by Pradip Bhattacharya http://www.boloji.com/women/0076.htm

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The forest in Bharatavarsha is not just a savage jungle where man reverts to the bestial. On the other hand, the very fountainhead of our civilization lies here, its helmsmen being the seers and sages, a place where man lives in harmony with nature. We stumble across hermitages resonant with the chanting of mantras, fragrant with the smoke of yajnic fires, holy teerthas to purify oneself. Yet, it is a mysterious world peopled not just by the usual denizens. Suddenly the blood freezes, accosted by terrifying shape-shifting demons and pythons hissing human speech, enchanting lakes guarded by Yakshas and Rakshasas, deceptively pellucid waters on whose banks lie corpses. Here woman faces down immutable, inexorable Death itself. That is why Tagore saw in "tapovan", the forest of ascesis, the very soul of Bharata.

In Vyasa's creation, the twelve years exile of the five brothers and their wife is not simply a period of inaction. It is an interval providing an opportunity for turning away from the external world and the extrovert personality to look within. The only one who does so is Yudhishthira, so ill at ease on a throne in a tumultuous capital city. He may well say with Andrew Marvell:

> Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
> And Innocence thy sister dear?
> Mistaken long, I sought you then
> In busy companies of men...
> Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
> Withdraws into its happiness;...

Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

More mature than when they suffered their first exile in the forest of Hidimba, anguished by the incidents in the royal court, Yudhishthira repeatedly seeks guidance from seers and sages, eager to reach that state of which the *Rig Veda* and the *Svetashvatara Upanishad* speak:

Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and combs its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

By the end of the *Vana Parva*, when he has satisfied the disguised Yaksha and won resurrection for his brothers, it seems that he may have approached it.

However, the forest exile is not a blissful sylvan break for the Pandavas. At Yudhishthira's command, they have to take up arms to rescue their tormentor Duryodhana from the Gandharvas. Twice Draupadi is abducted–once along with three of her husbands who are helpless till Bhima turns up–and then by Jayadratha. Twice Draupadi inveigles Bhima into reckless confrontations with Yakshas and Rakshasas to satisfy her fancies. During their journey to meet Arjuna, Draupadi is first to collapse on the slopes of Gandhamadana, presaging the scene of the final departure, with the difference that her husbands rush to her rescue. Twice the story of Rama is brought before them: once to Bhima alone by Hanuman and then to Yudhishthira by Markandeya as an example of an exiled prince. Twice Bhima is taught the limits of his strength: once by his ancestor Nahusha-turned-python and next by his stepbrother Hanuman. Death is confronted twice, and on both occasions he gives in to the integrity of the human being. Yudhishthira is groomed for his final confrontation with the deadly Dharma-crane through the questions Nahusha puts to him, the dialogue between Savitri and the lord of death, and the many stories that he hears from the sages, notably those of Rama-Sita and of Nala-Damayanti in which the themes of dicing, exile in the forest, battle and restoration are repeated. The exile itself is doubled for the audience: the story of Rama's fourteen year exile is recounted as a parallel to the Pandavas' thirteen year ordeal.

The *Vana Parva* consists of eighteen chapters–a significant

number in this epic of eighteen books whose climax is the eighteen days war. Much of it is taken up by a description of pilgrimage spots–as many as 350 related by Pulastya (235), Dhaumya (53) and Lomasha (60) in over 2400 verses. Similar accounts are found later in the *Shalya Parva* (43 spots in 77 verses) and the *Anushasana Parva* (81 in 66 verses). The interesting point is that these are not just magically cleansing lakes or river-crossings. Pulastya, ancestor of the Rakshasas and Yakshas, clarifies that visiting them is of value only if the visitor has faith and is pure of heart. It is here that for the first time we find a deliberate attempt to describe pilgrimage as an institution which became a feature of the Puranas. These descriptions came to dominate Indian cultural geography, covering practically the entire country with the idea that encouraging people to visit these in a circuit would foster cultural mingling and unity. Tagore points out that through the rivers the consciousness of the receptive human being touches the Supreme Consciousness, cleansing him of the layer of illusion.

The first chapter begins with the hermit Shaunaka (again a parallel to the sage to whom Sauti narrates the epic) reading the Pandavas a lesson in desire being the root of all misery, which reiterates the realisations of Yayati in the *Adi Parva*. He also provides Yudhishthira the core teaching of Karma Yoga by saying that the message of the Vedas is to do karma, but renounce its fruit; perform dharma, but take no pride in doing so.

In the second chapter, where Krishna visits the Pandavas, we find him explaining his absence. This is the first clue that his miraculous rescuing of Draupadi from being stripped is a later interpolation. When Draupadi upbraids Krishna, her "grief-rich tears" drenching "her heavy, round, lovely breasts", she does not refer to the attempted disrobing, only to being dragged while menstruating but specifically mentions being mocked by Karna. The transcreation captures the anguish in simple words flying straight to the mark:

> "Husbands, sons. Relatives, brothers, father,
> I have no one. No one. No one.
> Not even you, Madhusudana-Krishna...
> Keshava, Krishna,
> There are four reasons you must help me.
> Am I not related to you?
> Don't you respect me as a woman?
> Am I not your loved-and-loving sakhi?

Haven't you vowed to protect me?"

How true the first two lines are about her situation at the end of the war! In response, Krishna makes his famous vow in words that echo those of Devavrata making his "Bhishma" vow:

"You will be rani of rajas!
The skies will fall,
The Himalayas shatter,
The earth split in two,
The ocean's waters dry up–
But what I promise you, Krishna-Draupadi,
Will not fail to happen."

In the process, ironically, he dooms himself and his entire clan.

The *Parva* provides a veritable cliff-hanger with its account of Karna deliberately giving away his impenetrable armour and celestial earrings for the sake of fame. This account also provides one of the several accounts of his birth, with a detailed narration of how Surya browbeat the adolescent Kunti into giving in to his demands. There is an interesting hint here of a shared identity between Durvasa and Surya, both described as being *madhupingala* in complexion.

In Puranic accounts, Shri leaves the demons and goes over to the gods to become Indra's "good fortune and prosperity". Draupadi's insistence on accompanying the Pandavas into exile is, therefore, doubly significant: their Shri has not abandoned them. Throughout the exile she constantly badgers Yudhishthira, desperately and tirelessly labouring to arouse in him a desire to win back what she symbolises and which he has gambled away. When Jatasura abducts Draupadi along with the twins and Yudhishthira, her eldest husband's warning to the Rakshasa contains a significant revelation of her destructiveness:

"In touching this woman you have drunk a jar of well-stirred poison." (III.157.26)

While she is like a boat to her husbands, saving them from drowning in the sea of distress, to the wicked she is death itself. Throughout the thirteen years of exile she never allows her husbands and her *sakha* to forget how she was outraged and they were cheated of their kingdom. The marital relationship between Draupadi and the Pandavas is constantly that of a mahout goading an elephant into the fray. Krishnâ's urging Yudhishthira in the forest that *karma* and individual enterprise, *purushartha*, are indispensable to preserve society and one's integrity anticipates

her *sakha* Krishna's discourse to Arjuna on the battlefield. She is the only one among the Pandavas and Kauravas who assumes the atheistic stance in a violent outburst, exclaiming (III.30.23, III.32) that creatures are like wooden dolls (*darumayi yosha*) in the hands of a whimsical creator, recalling the significance of her own name Panchali, anticipating King Lear's heart-wrenching "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods/They kill us for their sport" and Hardy's "the President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess." This is part of the political science she learned, listening to a learned Brahmin discoursing to her father and brothers (III.30.60-61). It calls forth Yudhishthira's plea to abandon such *nastika* heresy She gives this back in full measure after the war when he wishes to become a hermit, by saying that were his brothers not equally crazy, they would have tied him up as an atheist and ruled the kingdom themselves (XII.14.33). The complete account of income and expenditure of her husbands was in her grasp and she alone knew the extent of their wealth. She kept track of what each of the many maidservants attending on her husband was doing. It is she who used to make all the arrangements for Yudhishthira's tours, keeping count of the large retinue of horses and elephants and their quartering, laying aside her own comfort (III.233.458).

Another piquant passage is the conversation between Satyabhama and Draupadi. Krishna's favourite wife is insecure and worried stiff over how to keep his interest active. Draupadi gives her a long lecture on wifely duties, which has the marks of a later interpolation all over it. However, it has some very interesting insights such as that she took care never to complain about her mother-in-law, whatever the aggravation; never rivalled her in ornaments, dress and even the food taken. The healthy respect the Pandavas had for her has been well brought out in Rajshekhar Basu's delightful take-off "Panchali – beloved of the five"[1].

We come across interesting insights such as the duel between Bhima and the Rakshasa Kirmira being compared to Vali and Sugriva clashing over a woman. In the *Rama-Katha* that follows later, Vali suspects that Tara is dissuading him from responding to Sugriva's challenge because she favours him. Valmiki's epic is innocent of this hint, which was part of the older tradition. The *Rama-Katha* has many other interesting differences from the *Ramayana*, such as Manthara being the gandharvi Dundubhi sent by Brahma to be reborn for bringing about Rama's exile, Sita being consoled by a Rakshasa named Avindhya who is richly rewarded

by Rama. Lakshmana is seen, in a dream, on a heap of bones licking boiled milk and honey rice–precisely the image applied by Karna to Yudhishthira in his discourse with Krishna in the *Udyoga Parva*. There is no burning of Lanka by Hanuman, nor does he carry Rama's signet ring to Sita and no fire-ordeal. The story ends with the return to Ayodhya.

Besides these major *katha*s, there are shorter stories about Agastya's feats, Rishyashringa (again a link with the *Ramayana*), thousand-armed Kartavirya Arjuna, Mandhata, Dhundhumara, the hair-raising account of Somaka sacrificing his only son Jantu to beget a hundred sons, the self-sacrificing generosity of Shibi, Ashtavakra, the unusual story of Yavakrita which Girish Karnad turned into a remarkable play *Agnivarsha*, Chyavana-Sukanya and Parikshit-Sushobhana the heartbreaker frog-princess (both turned into wonderful love stories by Subodh Ghose[2]), the peculiar story of Indradyumna's search for someone who remembers him, the birth and victory of Skanda that inspired *Kumarasambhava*. There are some unusually 'subaltern' didactic stories that show the superiority of dedication to duty over asceticism (the devoted wife, the righteous butcher, the householder Brahmin Mudgala).

The climax of the *Parva* comes in the questioning of Yudhishthira by the Yaksha, where the depth of the Pandava's wisdom is plumbed and not found wanting. It his dedication to *anrishamsyam*, non-injury, that wins him the favour. That is when he is found fit to regain his kingdom in future and given the boon of not being recognised in disguise during the incognito exile period. The interaction contains some gems of insight that encapsulate in just a *shloka* the most profound truths of existence; such as:

> "That man is happy who,
> Nor in debt and not in a foreign land,
> In his own home, in the fifth or sixth part of the day,
> Cooks a vegetarian meal and eats it.
> Every day creatures die. They go to the realm of Yama
> Yet everyone thinks he will live for ever.
> What is more wonderful than this?"

This is also where the famous epigram, "Dharma violated destroys; Dharma cherished protects" is spoken by Yudhishthira.

The transcreation is all through extremely reader-friendly, in rhythmic free verse. There are few errors, one of which is in the *Rama-Katha* where in a dream (280.71) Sita is said to be proceeding

south, the deathly direction, whereas the original has "north". The volume is enriched with 123 facsimile reproductions showing the extensive revisions and note made by Prof. Lal to his original version for his weekly readings that began in October 1999. 4 pages of errata to the *Adi* and *Sabha parva* volumes are added.

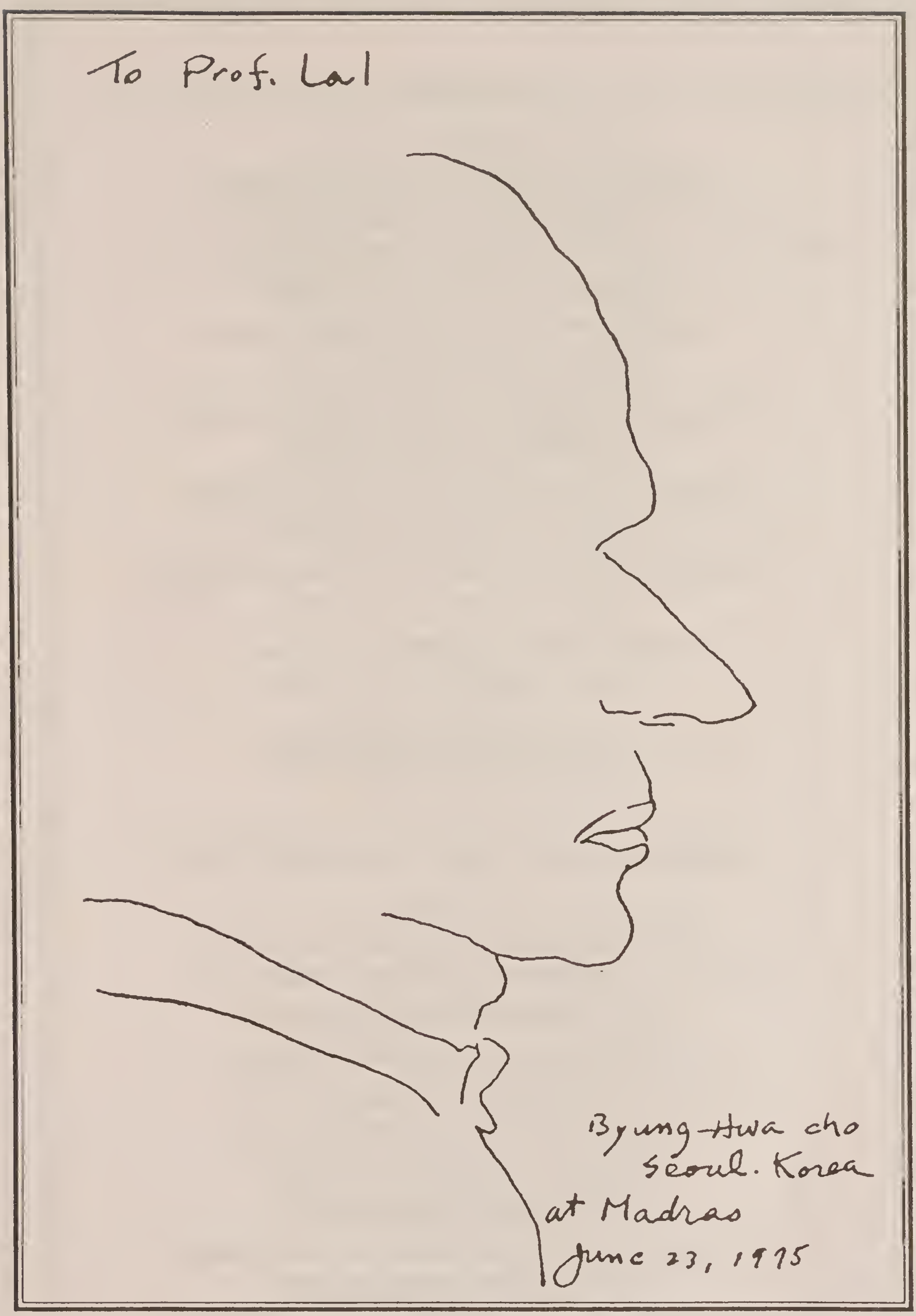
The *Introduction to the Mahabharata* is a reproduction of what introduced the single volume condensation of the epic published in 1980 that remains unparalleled in English for its masterly selection of material and is the only one that effortlessly shifts to poetry where necessary. It is Dr. Lal who first called it "the Doomsday Epic" and this introduction shows why the epithet is deserved. Besides the hard-core narrative, there are excellent thumbnail sketches of the major characters concentrating on the psychological mainsprings of action, and an insightful section on the message of the epic which contains a superb retelling of the Kalpataru parable. His conclusion is that the meaning of life lies in compassion, without which you end up with doomsday. It ends with a valuable discourse on the challenges of translating Vyasa.

The portfolio of Mahabharata paintings makes available paintings from Ramananda Chatterjee's edition of Kashiram Das' version of the epic in Bangla verse. Most artists belong to the Bengal Renaissance school, but there is Ravi Varma as well and some miniatures. One Ravi Varma painting depicts Simhika leading Draupadi–an incident known in the South but absent in Vyasa. In addition to these, the book provides the text of Padma Shri Prof. Lal's brilliant valedictory address to Sahitya Akademi's 1990 international seminar on the *Mahabharata.* To read it is to realise the profundity of insights hidden in the simplest of stories–Prof. Lal takes up four–some of which travelled all the way to the West to become famous as "Barlaam and Josaphat", the tale of the man in the well. A veritable cornucopia indeed!

[1] Parashuram's "Panchapriya Panchali", translated into English by Major General S.K. Sen, VSM in *Puranic Tales for Cynical People* (Indialog, New Delhi, 2005)

[2] Pradip Bhattacharya: *Love Stories from the Mahabharata* (Indialog, New Delhi, 2005).

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Writers Workshop ~ A Credo by P. Lal

Glory be to Mahakala. It is now 2006. I am three score and eighteen. Time for some home truths. Because WRITERS WORKSHOP has close to 3200 separate titles in its checklist (published over 48 years 1958-2006), and because it has averaged around 100 titles each year since 1995, there is a misconception that it is an Indian publishing leviathan. (No other publisher in India has that many titles on its annual list.) The truth is much less awesome. WRITERS WORKSHOP has no office; it operates from my residence, from the living-room and a multi-purpose bedroom. It has no secretary; my "secretary" is a three-tiered Godrej filing cabinet. It has no editor, no "readers" to inspect, evaluate and OK typescripts; I do all three tasks. It has no proofreader; I perform the nitty-gritty of deleting, accreting and correcting. It has no "assistant" to acknowledge or follow up letters; I do all that too. It has no typewriter; I reply in longhand. (From 2004, kowtowing to the hi-tech convenience, I sometimes seek help from my computer-savvy grand-daughter Shuktara to e-mail replies to insistent and urgent enquiries for WW information.) It has no retail or wholesale distribution "outlet"; there is only a cubby-hole of a kiosk at my residence (8 feet x 4 feet roughly) called the Book Nook, where a dedicated young assistant attends to intermittent sales of WW books. This Lake Gardens kiosk opened in 1998, 40 years after WW's inception.

How then has WW survived? Without plush foundations to back it, without advertisement, without large-hearted patrons? Initially, by the skin of our teeth (1958-1964). Then (1965-1990) by my visits to hard currency lands, specially Great Britain, the USA and Australia on lecture assignments and visiting professorships on two dozen or so occasions, and pumping the shekels thus earned to keep alive a gasping ideal.

Alternative publishing is desperately needed wherever commercial publication rules. WW is *not* a professional publishing house. It does not print well-known names; it makes names known and well known, and then leaves them in the loving clutches of the so-called "free" market (which can be and is very cut-throat and very expensive). It is not sad, it is obnoxious, to plead, as publishers do, "I will not publish poetry because it does not sell." Most English book publishing today in boom-time India and outside is book-dumping. There is a nexus between high-profile PR-conscious book publishers, semi-literate booksellers, moribund public and state libraries, poorly informed and nepotistic underlings in charge of book review pages and supplements of most national newspapers and magazines, and biased bulk purchases of near worthless books by bureaucratic institutions set up–believe it or not!–to inform, educate and elevate the reading public.

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